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UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO CONTRIBUTIONS TO PHILOSOPHY

No. V

THE INDIVIDUAL AND HIS RELATION  
TO SOCIETY

AS REFLECTED IN BRITISH ETHICS

PART I

THE INDIVIDUAL IN RELATION TO LAW AND INSTITUTIONS

BY

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#### NOTE

The treatment of the theme in Part I will be found to include a wider range than is indicated by the title. But the emphasis is intended to be upon the moral constitution and relations of the individual, and other aspects of thought are treated only as throwing light on these. As to the respective shares of the joint authors in the work, while each has had the benefit of the suggestions of the other, Miss THOMPSON is directly responsible for the section on Cumberland, and Mr. TUFTS for the remainder of the essay.





## INTRODUCTION.

British ethical reflection may be conveniently considered under three periods: the first antecedent to Shaftesbury; the second extending from Shaftesbury to the close of the eighteenth century; the third embracing the present century. The present essay, which is designed to form part of a study of the development of individuality and individualism as reflected in modern thought, will confine itself to the first two periods, and, without pretending to be exhaustive, will aim to interpret the leading categories in terms of the actual life of the writers.

As has often been noted, the two periods in question are characterized by different points of view in their treatment of ethical questions. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were preëminently interested in religious and political themes. Commerce and industry had entered on that course of expansion which was to break down national barriers and reorganize the structure and interests of society; but commerce and industry were as yet viewed rather as means to political power than as ends in themselves. The attitude of England to the Reformation was doubtless at the outset largely determined by policy, but the new conception of individual rights and responsibilities soon laid such hold on countrymen of Knox and Milton that, instead of the *cujus regio ejus religio* of the continent, the religious convictions of the subject could shape a commonwealth or change a dynasty. And finally, the ecclesiastical and constitutional struggles forced the relation of the individual to authority home upon the whole people, and called out the most notable productions of the time. In the eighteenth century, at least in the first half, neither religious nor political enthusiasm lifted individuals above private interests into unity of faith and action; but with the spread of commerce and intelligence, economic and social conditions had brought their categories of interest and good-will into the foreground, while the virtues were estimated, not in relation to law of God or man, but in terms of the ordinary relations of the merchant and neighbor. God, in the first period, is author of a law; in the second he is the benevolent disposer of a universe in which private and public happiness is most skillfully adjusted. Milton sings man's disobedience and redemption, or sounds the note of human freedom; Swift

and Pope satirize man's cupidity or praise his natural goodness. The century of Hobbes and Cumberland is the age of natural rights and laws of nature; the century of Shaftesbury and Butler, of Hume and Smith, is the period of self-love and sympathy; while Locke, with the ethics of the one and the psychology of the other, stands as mediator between the two.

## THE INDIVIDUAL AND HIS RELATION TO SOCIETY AS REFLECTED IN BRITISH ETHICS.

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### PART I.

#### THE INDIVIDUAL IN RELATION TO LAWS AND INSTITUTIONS

##### SECTION I. THE LIFE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE PERIOD.

1. Although, as already stated, this was not a period in which economic categories were dominant in thought, it is none the less true that the actual economic conditions were intricately involved in the religious and political conditions, and must, therefore, be briefly noted in an attempt to get a conception of the individual of this period.

The fact of capital importance is that in this period England ceased to be exclusively agricultural and became in a steadily rising degree a commercial and manufacturing people. This meant that the influences which had been so potent in Italy and the Low Countries for the awakening and strengthening of individuality were now to be transferred to British soil. The causes of this were no doubt in part political. The deliberate aim to build up national power, clearly conceived by the statesmen of Elizabeth's time, fostered all agencies which it was believed would conduce to this end. Refugees from the cruelties of Alva, Huguenots from France, bringing the trades of wool and linen and silk manufacture, found ready welcome. Shipping, as peculiarly valuable for an island kingdom, was given especial encouragement. Colonies, whatever the motives of the emigrants themselves, were favored by the government as supplying raw material and requiring manufactures from the home country, exchanged in English ships.<sup>1</sup> It was an age of commerce and industry controlled in the interests of national power.

Looking now at the significance for individuality of the new lines of activity thus opened to the British people, we note in the first place that it means the growing power of movable property, born of labor,

<sup>1</sup> For the economic conditions and theories of this time I am chiefly indebted to Cunningham's *English Commerce and Industry*.



in its struggle with landed property, born of conquest.<sup>1</sup> Individual skill and boldness of initiative found new fields for development. The expansion of England involved the widening of individual as well as of national horizons. Although as yet submitting to be governed in his private business by regulations made in the supposed interest of the nation, the individual was started on the road on which he would ultimately refuse to consider public policy as a thing apart from the sum of the goods of the individuals composing the public. This becomes more apparent when we consider the changes in the character of commerce itself which mark the modern as compared with the mediæval system. These changes, as pointed out by Cunningham,<sup>2</sup> accompany the breaking down of the corporate conduct of industry and commerce by the guild, and the substitution of individual self-interest as the leading factor. The recognition of the fact that the state might be economically justified in allowing free play to individual self-interest marks a distinct departure. The revolution in public opinion about money transactions marks even more completely the change. In the Middle Ages, to take any interest for the use of money was usury. It was taking advantage of the needs of the borrower. But with the increase of bullion, the opportunities for investment, and the new situation of the borrower, who was now not the unfortunate victim of circumstances but the prosperous banker or trader seeking to extend his business, money transactions were regarded like other exchanges. It became possible, through the formation of capital, to handle the property resulting from the labor of many just as the feudal lord had controlled the persons. But inasmuch as capital stands for the accumulated labor and skill of men in a form set free from the persons of the laborers, it now becomes possible to control the one and leave the other a measure of freedom. The old feudal conditions had always been favorable enough for the development of courage and power in the lord; the new commercial conditions afforded the opportunity for the same development on the part of the merchant. Ambition had now a larger scope for exercise and a richer prize to reward success, when dress and style of life were regulated, not by station, but by ability. Competition began its work of stimulation, and "an active middle class was coming to the front, well able to insist on having a say in the direction of affairs."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Baudrillart, *Jean Bodin et son temps*, pp. 7 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, I, 404 ff.; II, 67-97.

<sup>3</sup> Cunningham, II, 10.

2. Politically the English people was feeling its way toward that democracy which the radical William of Occam had already proclaimed as the source of all sovereignty, and to which Wiclif had already made appeal in things religious. While on the surface the Tudor monarchs exercised almost arbitrary royal power, they held it "only because they were ever regardful of popular opinion."<sup>1</sup> "A new age of political liberty was felt to be at hand when Martin Marprelate forced the political and ecclesiastical measures of the government into the arena of public discussion;"<sup>2</sup> and though the Stuarts proclaimed the doctrines of divine right and absolute monarchy, and thus began at once that struggle against the tide which was to cost one his life and another his throne, the tide was but checked in this course or that to gather strength for a more resistless sweep. The popular will, at first seeking for expression through the crown, was to find in Parliament a fitter organ.<sup>3</sup> It was but anticipating the actual advance of history when the Commons declared, in their struggle with the King and Lords, "that the people under God are the original of all just power, and that the House of Commons have the supreme power of the nation." Commercial England would have naught of an absolute sovereignty over taxation. Puritan England was in no temper to hear of any right divine to compel the individual's conscience.

3. For the great significance of the religious consciousness of this age was its sense of individual responsibility to God, and to God alone, of the divine will manifesting itself in the individual and so exalting him to dignity and power. The individual of the Renaissance had grown into consciousness of himself and his powers through the activities of commercial and industrial life, and had found expression in literature and art. Over against the old constraints of the mediæval he had set the new forces of the rediscovered secular life with its joys and its free play of æsthetic interests. The individual of the Reformation found himself in a sterner crisis, and over against the older powers of dogma and tradition he set the mighty universal of God himself, to whom he could appeal, and reinforced by whose strength he could defy all human sovereignty. "The Christian is through his God an independent being, who needs nothing, and stands neither

<sup>1</sup> Medley, *Manual of English Constitutional History*, chap. vi, sec. 43.

<sup>2</sup> Green, *Short History of the English People*, chap. viii.

<sup>3</sup> Burgess, *Political Science and Comparative Constitutional Law*, Vol. I, Bk. III, chap. i.



under the bondage of commands of law nor in dependence on men. He is priest before God, and a king over the world."<sup>1</sup> The professed seat of authority in the Middle Ages was, to be sure, the divine law; but it was a law mediated through a church, interpreted by the clergy, embodied in writings which only the doctor could read. The authority of the Reformation was to be experienced directly and immediately by the individual; at most it was recorded in writings which any believer could interpret; and for those who pushed the principle farthest there was an inner illumination of the spirit supreme over any dogma of the letter. A desire to be one's self went hand in hand with a humble trust in the Almighty—a union which may sometimes degenerate into cant and hypocrisy, but is none the less a vital characteristic of the time, and speaks in Spinoza, no less than in Calvin or Cromwell, in the demand for freedom of prophesying as well as in the creeds of the new faith.<sup>2</sup> It was a true instinct which led Hobbes in his defense of political absolutism to attack the Puritan view of religion, for this had been the most powerful factor in the Puritan spirit of independence.

4. The intellectual atmosphere of the time, no less than the industrial, political, and religious, was that of an awakening liberty of thought, accompanied by a new recognition of the scope and significance of natural law. A Bacon was followed by a Boyle and a Newton. Galileo and Descartes stand at once the assertors of a new method and the discoverers of the laws of a nature which, to a degree impossible before, stands now revealed to man as orderly and harmonious. It seems to his naïve theory of knowledge, not the embodiment of his own categories, but the source from which all experience flows, and whose laws are there, majestic, eternal, and supreme, to be recognized and obeyed if the individual would rise to mastery of his situation and bend nature's forces to his ends. This conception of natural law we shall see to be of determining influence for a whole line of English ethics, but the end to be attained by discovery and invention was consciously in mind in a Bacon's "New Atlantis," and finds recognition in a Hobbes and Spinoza. In principle, at least, the individual was beginning to feel dimly, yet surely, that knowledge is power.<sup>3</sup>

5. In literature, after that splendor of dramatic spontaneity which

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, III, 719.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. further Harnack, III, 577 f.

<sup>3</sup> Windelband, *History of Philosophy*, p. 386.

could find itself at home in every sphere of life had passed away, but two names stand forth as conspicuous. Bacon, like his contemporary, Montaigne, gives the reflections of the man who is finding himself at home in his world. Milton, who is in prose the impassioned pleader for larger liberty in speech, in the realization of the ends of marriage, and in the conduct of the state, embodies in his epic of the race the twofold aspect of Puritan consciousness, the story of divine law and of human guilt and emancipation. But if we are to judge the literary spirit of a time not merely by its productions, but by its appreciations, then we have to remember that the book which was read until it formed the warp into which all the new contents of life were woven was the new English Bible, and especially the Old Testament. The blending of theocracy with recognition of individual choice of rulers, the ascriptions to divine majesty, the emotional outpouring of the individual soul and its reliance on God which find triumphant expression in the Psalms, all these voiced the Puritan consciousness; and the New Englander, in his bleak and lonely land, left out no part of the parallel, but saw in the Indians the heathen who, like the Canaanites, were hostile to the people of God.

#### SECTION II. THE INDIVIDUAL IN THE REFLECTIVE THOUGHT OF THE PERIOD.

The reflective thought of the period was naturally centered about the two categories which we have found coming to consciousness in the various activities of life, viz.: that of the individual on the one hand, and that of some controlling law or universal on the other. The category through which it was sought to reconcile these was usually that of compact. We shall point this out briefly for economics and theology, and more in detail in the case of politics and ethics.

##### 1. *Economics.*

Although there is little distinctively economic theory in this period, the general point of view is that of an increasing recognition of private interest as a motive force, while the conception of trade and national power involved in the mercantile theory is kept steadily in view. "In mediæval times it [the individual desire of wealth] was recognized only to be condemned as immoral; in our own day it is sometimes spoken of as though there were a prearranged harmony which made private self-seeking tend unconsciously to public good; in Elizabeth's



time Hales considers it is possible for the government so to modify circumstances that it shall lead to the public good."<sup>1</sup> Hobbes, while conceiving private interest as the motive force, and defending the good as the satisfaction of desires, puts his economic theories under the head of the "Nutrition and Procreation of a Commonwealth," and would have not merely foreign trade but domestic industry controlled for public advantage. Harrington, who stands to Hobbes in economics as Cumberland stands in ethics, affords an interesting illustration of the employment of the two categories. The conception of natural law is taken for the basis of his political and economic organization, and this law of nature is identical, not with the individual's interest, but with the "interest of mankind." But the individual is recognized in that the *authority* of the government as contrasted with its force depends on the "goods of the mind" and the choice of those who obey it. And the power of wealth, now just emerging to distinct consciousness, finds recognition in the new and important doctrine that the nature of a government is determined by the distribution of its landed property,<sup>2</sup> which must, accordingly, be so regulated by the government as to secure a proper balance of interest. The end, viz., the common interest, is prescribed by the law of nature, but the efficient forces of individual wealth are seen in new significance when it is declared that they may make or unmake the universal, which is still in older fashion regarded as something other than the sum of its particulars.

## 2. *Theology.*

The great theological controversies of the day showed in more explicit form the struggle between individual and universal. It was by no means a revolt against all authority—that was reserved for a later generation—but a recourse in the first instance to divine authority, immediately manifest or directly accessible in the Scriptures, as contrasted with church and dogma; and, in the second instance, when the "formal rule" of Protestantism had become as external an authority as the dogmas of the church, an appeal to the laws of reason, or the inner light. In the great theological controversy of the time, Calvinism stood for the absolute sovereignty of God. His eternal decrees are unsearchable, his grace is irresistible, his elect are secure

<sup>1</sup> Cunningham, II, 70 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Bonar, *Philosophy and Political Economy*, 87 f.

against outward assault and inward lapse. The Arminian, on the other hand, sought the "maintenance of human responsibility, and the moral conditions of praise and blame, reward and penalty, while still upholding salvation by grace."<sup>1</sup> It was an "attempt to formulate a protest from an ethical point of view." But it is characteristic of the time that in Arminianism as well as in Calvinism the central category is that of sovereignty. For the celebrated "governmental theory of the atonement," which was defended by Grotius the Arminian, conceives the relation of God to man as that of ruler to subject. Moreover, the modification of the Calvinistic system which obtained greatest acceptance in England was in close analogy to the political theories of the day. For while the "covenants" of works and grace which were taught by the "Federal Theology" and set forth in the Westminster Confession were not contracts in exactly the sense of the social contract, they yet set up "jural relations in the room of bare sovereignty," and attempted to give some answer to the difficulty beginning to be felt in making men accept the guilt of Adam as their own. The realistic conceptions of the Middle Ages still lived on in some forms of the theory in the connection of men with Adam, but the growing individualism showed itself in the general acceptance of creationism, and in the conception that the relation of the individual to Christ was personal and not generic. The famous Barebones bore in his long name the symbol at once of racial guilt and of personal salvation.

As already stated, the second advance in this field during this period lay in the movement called Rational Theology.<sup>2</sup> Reformed theology had become scholasticism. The shelter of the advancing line of progress became all too soon the bulwark of authority, and the individual sought a new support in the "laws of right reason," a universal to which Descartes had already made triumphant appeal, and to which the methods and successes of the dawning science of nature seemed to lend additional surety. What is antiquity but "man's authority born some ages before us"?<sup>3</sup>

In its attempts to magnify the divine greatness, Calvinism had reduced the individual's "natural" condition to the state of sin and misery. From this the elect was rescued and made triumphant by

<sup>1</sup> Fisher, *History of Christian Doctrine*, 1896, pp. 339 f.

<sup>2</sup> Tulloch, *Rational Theology and Christian Theology in England in the Seventeenth Century*.

<sup>3</sup> John Hales, cited in Tulloch, I, p. 249.



grace. But for man in this "state of nature" little divine illumination was admitted. The "rational" theologians, on the other hand, in their attempt to reinstate man into some measure of individual dignity, emphasized rather man's rational ability and considered "religion as a seed of a deiform nature."<sup>1</sup> Some of the school, in their emphasis upon the rational nature of man, resorted to the Neo-Platonist conception of innate ideas against which Locke was to direct his polemic. This found favor especially with the "Cambridge School," which remained in sympathy with the church. Another party, of which Lord Herbert of Cherbury was the leader, found a more congenial formulation in the Stoic and Ciceronian conception of "common notions" and a religion of nature.<sup>2</sup> The individual was not driven to external authority, nor deprived of all "natural light." He had within himself the sources of truth, and their validity was guaranteed, it was maintained, by their universal presence in the minds of men.<sup>3</sup> Every man was thus not merely, as with Luther, the interpreter of a Scripture; he was himself a deposit, a document of revelation.

The doctrine of innate ideas which, to Locke's view, was an obstacle to progress, a hindrance to a completely rational theory of human experience, and a reliance of conservatism, was thus in its origin an assertion of the worth of the individual, and of the immediate access of the individual to the sources of truth and reason.

### 3. *Political Theory.*

1. The political theories of the time vary from the defenses of divine right to the doctrines of popular sovereignty, but the instructive aspect of the period is that the ablest thinkers, whether the "judicious" Churchman, the impassioned advocate of freedom, or the timid and conservative absolutist, all agree in recognizing the original sovereignty of the people, and in assuming that in them must be found the sanction for the power of monarch or commonwealth.

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Burnett, cited in Fisher's *History of Christian Doctrine*, p. 366.

<sup>2</sup> Dilthey has pointed out with great detail the dependence of Herbert upon Cicero and Stoic writings, and in general the utilization of the Stoic concept of "nature" as an auxiliary, in the attempt to reach autonomy of thought in this period. (*Archiv für Gesch. d. Philos.*, Bde. VI and VII, especially VII, p. 41.)

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Hooker: "The general and perpetual voice of men is as the sentence of God himself. For that which all men have at all times learned, nature herself must needs have taught; and God being the author of nature her voice is but his instrument." (*Ecclesiastical Polity*, I, viii, 3.)

In the case of the Churchman or the Puritan this is carried back still farther to the divine authority itself as ultimate. For, as we have seen, this was really the essence of the religious consciousness of the Reformers. The classic statement from Hooker is as follows:

Two foundations there are which bear up public societies: the one a natural inclination, whereby all men desire sociable life and fellowship; the other an order expressly or secretly agreed upon touching the manner of their union in living together. . . . The lawful power of making laws to command whole political societies of men belongeth so properly unto the same entire societies, that for any prince or potentate of what kind soever on earth to exercise the same of himself, and not either by express commission immediately, personally received from God, or else by authority derived at first from their consent upon whose persons they impose laws, is no better than mere tyranny. Laws they are not therefore, which public approbation hath not made so.<sup>1</sup>

Clearer still is the statement of the New England document entitled "The Model of the Church in Civil Power," written probably by Richard Mather:

In the free state no magistrate hath power over the bodies, goods, lands, liberties, of a free people, but by their own consent; and as all free men are only stewards of God, they may not give the magistrate power over these things as they please, but as God pleases.

But the plea for the rights of the individual which takes the highest ground is found in Milton's political writings:

No man who knows aught can be so stupid as to deny that all men naturally were born free, being the image and resemblance of God Himself, and we are by privilege above all the creatures born to command and not to obey; and that they lived so till from the root of Adam's transgression, falling among themselves to do wrong and violence, and foreseeing that such courses must needs turn to the destruction of them all, they agreed by common league to bind each other from mutual injury and jointly to defend themselves against any that gave disturbance to such agreement. Hence came cities, towns, and Commonwealths; and because no faith in all was found sufficiently binding, they saw it needful to ordain some authority that might restrain by force and punishment what was violated against peace and common right.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ecclesiastical Polity, I, x, 1, 8.

<sup>2</sup> The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates.



He argues that this has been the theory of government actually observed in Scotland and Holland, and in Britain from the earliest times, and cites with approval the bold utterance of Zwingli: "But when by sufferance and consent of the whole people, or the better part of them, a tyrant is deposed or put to death, God is the chief leader in that action."

It will scarcely escape notice how similar the view of Milton as to the reasons for establishing government is to the view of Hobbes, but this whole view of the state of nature, which is found not merely in the Epicurean Hobbes, but in the churchman Hooker, is really a part of the Reformation view of the natural man. To the theologian the natural man is "desperately wicked," and to the advocate of monarchical government anarchy involves the war of every man with his fellow. Hooker's view is, indeed, strikingly like that of Hobbes in its conception, not merely of the condition of man without civil society and law, but also in the reason assigned for that condition.

Laws politic [says Hooker] ordained for external order and regiment amongst men, are never framed as they should be, unless presuming the will of man to be inwardly obstinate, rebellious, and averse from all obedience unto the sacred laws of his nature; in a word, unless presuming man to be in regard of his depraved mind little better than a wild beast. . . . If therefore when there was but as yet one only family in the world, no means of instruction human or divine could prevent effusion of blood, how could it be chosen but that when families were multiplied and increased upon earth, after separation each providing for itself, envy, strife, contention, and violence must grow amongst them? For hath not nature furnished man with wit and valour, as it were with armour, which may be used as well unto extreme evil as good?<sup>1</sup>

2. The great significance of Hobbes lies not in his maintenance of absolutism; it had been strange, indeed, if conservatism had not produced one distinguished exponent in this as in other times of clashing interests. Nor does it lie in his most frequently cited doctrine of the state of nature as that of universal war, of the *homo homini lupus*; this, as we have seen, can be paralleled from Hooker, and is a point on which orthodox authority in abundance could be cited, as Hobbes is fully aware when he replies to the charge that he has made men wicked. A man writing after a quarter-century of that devastation and massacre called the Thirty-Years' War might well be pessimistic in his view of

<sup>1</sup> Ecclesiastical Polity, I, x, 1, 3.

human nature, and portray the horrors of that "hateful condition" of anarchy in such a light as to warn his countrymen, if possible, from such a fate. The significance lies rather in the facts that *the upholder of absolutism founds all authority on the free consent of individuals, that the friend of monarchy asserts the prior existence and indispensable agency of democracy*. That this is not ordinarily recognized in expositions of Hobbes is due to the fact that the "Leviathan" is usually made the basis of treatment, whereas the doctrines cited are stated much more emphatically in other works:

The first in order of time of these three sorts is democracy; and it must be so of necessity, because an aristocracy and a monarchy require nomination of persons agreed upon, which agreement in a great multitude of men must consist in the consent of the major part; and where the votes of the major part involve the votes of the rest, there is actually a democracy.<sup>1</sup>

Nor was this merely an earlier view abandoned with maturer thought, for in the "Behemoth," after the citation of the vote of the Commons already quoted (p. 9), the comments of the persons *B* and *A* of the dialogue are as follows:

*B*: "But yet, I believe, under God the original of all laws was in the people." *A*: "But the people, for them and their heirs, by consent and oaths, have long ago put the supreme power of the nation into the hands of their kings, for them and for their heirs; and consequently into the hands of this king, their known and lawful heir." (English Works VI, 353).

The case for the monarchy is placed entirely upon historical grounds. And this is, indeed, just where Hobbes was at fault. Like the House of Stuart itself, Hobbes had failed to read history aright and to see that the sovereignty, once located preëminently in the kings, was there no more. It is not that Hobbes makes sovereignty too absolute. The doctrine of absolute sovereignty is maintained by democratic writers of today<sup>2</sup> as vigorously as by Hobbes. Indeed, it is one of the interesting phenomena of progress that, as Ritchie points out,<sup>3</sup> the theory of natural rights, once the watchword of advance, is now more often the maxim of conservatism and "vested interests;" and the counterpart is equally true, that the possibility of an advancing democracy

<sup>1</sup> "De Corpore Politico," English Works, IV, 138 f.

<sup>2</sup> *E. g.*, Burgess, Political Science and Comparative Constitutional Law, Bk. II, chap. i; Willoughby, The Nature of the State, chap. ix.

<sup>3</sup> Natural Rights, pp. 13 ff.

demands an absolute sovereignty. It is because Hobbes' conception is thus capable of uses quite other than the defense of the existing order, as well as because of the basis of individual consent on which it rests, that Hobbes has always been felt to be in the intellectual kinship of the radical rather than the conservative. It was urged against him in his own lifetime that his theory could be made to justify the authority of Cromwell. It needed but to deny the legitimacy of the specific application made by him of his theory to fit one part of it for valiant service in the cause of progressive individualism and another part for service in the advance of organized society, when the social nature of the individual should come to fuller recognition.

Apart from the historical error, the logical error in Hobbes' theory was twofold: first, that he identified the sovereign with the government, and, secondly, that he regarded the sovereignty, once resident in the people, as alienable. Not to repeat the criticisms of Shaftesbury and Hume as to the possibility of getting civil society from such units as Hobbes postulates, the contradiction may be stated in a form more fruitful for our purpose of tracing the growing recognition of individuality as follows: Hobbes stands on the platform of his time in placing original sovereignty in the individual. But his conception of the individual is yet so purely that of an abstract unit of force that he imagines the individual to be capable of alienating his sovereignty and still remaining a moral agent. He conceives the will, in which the individual consists, and which performs the fundamental act of consent, as yet being so mechanical a thing that it can will to transfer its own prerogative to another and cease to be. It wills to annihilate itself. The individual submits to authority to secure self-preservation; but the "self" that is preserved by a denial of the essence of self is not a free or moral self. The subject of such a state would be morally in the same condition that he would be religiously in a church in which implicit faith in the doctrine, because taught by an authority, takes the place of any personal or intelligent acceptance. It was for Locke and Rousseau to declare for a larger conception of the individual in which sovereignty should be inalienable,<sup>1</sup> though they themselves rather voiced the progress of their age than saw its philosophic significance.

<sup>1</sup> Althus, however, had already (1610) maintained that the people cannot transfer the sovereignty (Janet, *Histoire de la science politique*, II, p. 49), and Milton regarded government as a trust. "To invest any mortal creatures with a power over



Another illustration of Hobbes' conception of the individual is his transformation of the term "*jus naturale*" from a social to an individual category, a transformation which requires a change in the category itself from a moral to a physical concept. The term *jus* had always been a term signifying primarily social control, corresponding to the English "law," and only secondarily a term denoting the individual's legal power. In particular, the term *jus naturale*<sup>1</sup> had borne in Roman and mediæval law the conception of a control founded in the constitution of the universe itself, the Stoic *φύσις*. But as the Stoic conception of nature signified preëminently a rational order, the law of nature was also defined as the law of right reason. This is embodied in the definition of Grotius: "*Jus naturale* is the dictate of right reason, showing that any act from its agreement or disagreement with rational nature itself [*cum ipsa natura rationali (ac sociali)*] is morally disgraceful or morally necessary, and consequently is forbidden or commanded by God, the author of nature."<sup>2</sup> Hobbes, in his English works, translates *jus* by "right," and thereby gives an entirely different meaning to the concept. For the English speech had always kept the term "right" (as substantive) for the designation of the individual's positive claim upon society, while the French and German terms have followed the twofold usage of the Latin *jus*.<sup>3</sup> The *jus* primarily signifies the control of society over the individual. A "right" expresses the control of the individual over society, in so far, that is, as it means that he can justly call on society, through the law, to support his claim, to reinforce his power. Interpreted in the later conceptions of Rousseau, in his attitude to law the individual is the citizen as subject, in his assertion of rights he is the citizen as sovereign. When Hobbes, themselves on any other terms than a trust were extreme madness." (A Defence of the People of England, chap. vi.)

<sup>1</sup> Ritchie, Natural Rights, chap. ii.

<sup>2</sup> Sidgwick, History of Ethics, p. 161, translates "from its agreement or disagreement with man's rational and social nature." But, from the authorities whom Grotius cites, I think this conveys to the modern ear too individualistic a conception. It was doubtless by man only that the *ipsa natura rationalis* could be apprehended (*nam juris proprie capax non est nisi natura præceptis utens generalibus*, § 11) in such a way as to make him a subject of law, but from the way in which Grotius goes on to speak of the *esse rerum*, it seems probable that the *ipsa natura rationalis* was something conceived in quite realistic fashion. It might be manifested in man, but it was by no means merely the sum total of individual tendencies or processes of thought.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Holland, Jurisprudence, chap. vii.



therefore, translates *jus naturale* by "right of nature," he gives it a decidedly individualistic turn, which immediately gives rise to a contradiction that must be met by a second transformation. For if we are to consider the state of man antecedent to society, or if we consider the present relations of armed states in war, where all laws are set aside and anarchy prevails, it is impossible to think longer of the individual as asserting rights in either moral or legal sense. He has no claim on society which society can recognize, for there is no society. Hence the logical outcome is that, if we still speak of natural rights, we must divest the term of all social implications, and leave the individual a purely physical concept. "The Right of Nature . . . is the liberty each man hath to use his own power, as he will himself, for the preservation of his own nature . . . By liberty is understood . . . the absence of external impediments"<sup>1</sup>—a conception which is further exhibited in his definition of the equality of men as their ability to do equal things.

Hobbes' own psychological justification of the turn given to the term "right of nature" is found in his individualistic definition of the term "right reason." Right reason in the older writers had meant the divine order of the universe and the capacity on man's part of entering into it. And as the universe was always regarded as social in its organization, *right* reason meant not primarily "*self-consistent*," but "*consistent with the divine order*." Hobbes' individual, however, is his own universe. He can recognize no order or control outside himself. Hence, right reason must mean self-consistency, or, what is but a change in point of view, self-preservation. "Forasmuch as necessity of nature maketh men to will and desire *bonum sibi*, that which is good for themselves, and to avoid that which is hurtful, . . . it is not against reason that a man doeth all he can to preserve his own body and limbs both from death and pain. And that which is not against reason, men call *right* or *jus*."<sup>2</sup> Moreover, Hobbes himself explicitly recognizes the twofold meaning of reason in a passage which may be freely translated as follows: "Although in an organized political society the corporate reason of the society—that is, the civil law—must be regarded by individual citizens as 'right' reason, yet where there is no organized society, where, consequently, no one can distin-

<sup>1</sup> Leviathan, chap. xiv. English Works, III, 116. Grotius also gives *libertas* as one meaning of *jus*, but it is a *potentia in se* regarded as a *qualitas moralis*. (I, i, secs. 4, 5.)

<sup>2</sup> "De Corpore Politico," English Works, IV, 83.

guish right reason from false reason except by comparing it with his own," etc.<sup>1</sup> We shall have to recur to this concept of reason again in examining Hobbes' ethics, but it may be characterized in its relation to the general movement of thought as follows: The Englishman, especially since the days of Elizabeth, is eminently a patriot. His hopes and personality are in the commonwealth. In this—under God alone, if religious enthusiast, or apart from any other authority whatever, if religiously indifferent—the controlling, normative law of life is to be placed. But his patriotism is not like that of the French, pre-eminently one of sentiment. The commonwealth is rather the object of his rational free-will than of his blindly passionate adoration. Hobbes was true to the prevailing genius of his countrymen when he magnified the state; when he urged peace; when he insisted that it is only in a state of civil society that the saying, *homo homini Deus*, applies. He was true to the other aspect of that genius when he tried to base the state on the individual's own inner motivation, his free act, determined by no reason outside himself. It was left for others to widen the self, to change the conception of freedom; but, to return to the assertion made at the outset, it is the merit of Hobbes to have set the individual in the forefront of discussion, and to have used him as the indispensable agency for the authorization of power.

#### 4. *Early Ethical Theory, especially Hobbes.*

Ethical and psychological thought in this period is so intimately dependent on political and juristic conceptions that it is a more or less arbitrary procedure to attempt to consider it by itself; but there are certain psychological implications as to human nature that may be arranged under this head with reference to the development of the succeeding period. In view, however, of the peculiar significance of Cumberland's thought, it seems better to consider his system by itself and as a whole.

The ethical consciousness of the Reformation involved in general a more inward conception of the moral life, and a greater emphasis

<sup>1</sup> "Quamquam in civitate, ipsius civitatis ratio, hoc est lex civilis," etc. (Latin Works, II, 170, note). The force is lost in the English version in English Works, II, 16. It may be thought that "corporate reason of the society" is too social a conception for Hobbes' phrase, but he so repeatedly distinguishes between the wills of the multitude as individuals and the will of the sovereign as person (and we must remember that sovereign means this same multitude organized) that the above translation seems quite in line with his general thought.



upon its voluntary aspect. "An act is good, not because it harmonizes with the law, but because the good is freely chosen. Thus, in opposition to the scholastic intellectualism which had subordinated will to knowledge and described conscience as a faculty of judgment and inference, the Reformation regards the moral will as that power of the human soul which ranks above all the powers of thought and knowledge."<sup>1</sup> But save for the fact that the early English writers on casuistry tended to reflect this higher authority of the individual conscience,<sup>2</sup> nothing of special significance for our purpose derives from this source. The main task of inwardizing the moral life, of finding its intrinsic value and its internal sanctions, was to proceed rather by a progressive analysis of the individual and society, emphasizing now one, now the other side of human nature, until both the ends and the sanctions of the moral life should be recognized as individual, and the individual should be recognized as social.

The opening theme for nearly all the variations that were to follow was announced by Bacon. For although admitting that the question as to the "supreme good" may belong to theology, and that the "light of nature," "which is imprinted upon the spirit of man by an inward instinct, according to the law of conscience, which is a sparkle of the purity of his first estate," may be only "sufficient to check the vice, but not to inform the duty," and hence that moral philosophy may be regarded as "a wise servant and humble handmaid" to "sacred divinity," he is evidently much more hopeful of the fertility of the handmaid than of that of the mistress, and believes that a little observation of nature in general on the part of moral philosophers would have given the clue to a psychological analysis that would have "saved and abridged much of their long and wandering discourses." Every part of nature, namely, shows four tendencies—to receive, to give, to assume harmonious relations to the whole, and to approach or seek what is higher of its own kind; and here we have the suggestion for a "quaternion of good."<sup>3</sup> Later he returns again to the necessity of consulting "with the nature of things as well as moral axioms," opposes the third kind of good in his earlier list to the other three taken together, and thus in both method and result suggests the work of Cumberland. "There is formed and imprinted

<sup>1</sup> Wundt, *Ethical Systems*, p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> See Whewell's *Lectures on the History of Moral Philosophy*, pp. 29 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Works, edition Spedding, III, 229 f.

in everything an appetite toward two natures of good; the one as everything is a total or substantive in itself, the other as it is a part or member of a greater body; whereof the latter is in degree the greater and the worthier, because it tends to the conservation of a more general form. The former of these may be termed 'Individual or Self-good,' the latter, the 'Good of Communion.'"<sup>1</sup> It is a striking illustration of the hold which the Christian principle of unity and self-sacrifice still retained that so shrewd an observer as Bacon should have thought it quite unnecessary to dwell on the second sort of good, "for never in any age has there been any philosophy, sect, religion, law, or other discipline which did so highly exalt the good which is communicative, and depress the good which is private and particular as the Holy Christian Faith." This twofold nature of good enables us to see the inadequacy of any theory that places good in contemplation—"in this theatre of man's life it is reserved only for God and Angels to be lookers on"—or in private pleasure or tranquility—"as if it were not a thing much more happy to fail in good and virtuous ends for the public than to obtain all that we can wish to ourselves in our private fortune." Nor is individual good to be conceived too narrowly. "For there is impressed on all things a triple desire or appetite in respect of self or individual good; one of preserving, another of perfecting, and a third of multiplying and spreading themselves," of which the last is "Active good," and though this has no necessary identity with the good of society, it is yet the stronger and more worthy of the individual goods, the perfective good coming second. Bacon's conception of the individual and his relation to society is thus that of the man of affairs who felt the thrill of ambition for himself, and came in touch with the men of large powers and achievements; that of the scholar who looks forth upon unknown possibilities of development; that of the shrewd observer who recognizes the play of selfish forces; but above all that of the statesman who finds the scope and opportunity for satisfaction only in the service of the state.<sup>2</sup> He suggests the cause of the narrowness of former philosophers, in terms which might apply also to some who followed. "So have philosophers sought in all things to make men's minds too uniform and harmonical, not breaking them to contrary motions and extremes; the reason whereof

<sup>1</sup> Works, edition Spedding, V, 7.

<sup>2</sup> Professor Fowler has shown that Bacon's Essays reflect the same standpoint. (Bacon, p. 41.)



I suppose to be because they themselves were men dedicated to a private life, free from business and from the necessity of applying themselves to other duties."<sup>1</sup>

It may not have needed the shock of religious and civil discord at home and the horrors of actual war abroad to make a narrower view of human nature and its springs of action seem more plausible to a man of Hobbes' timorous and suspicious constitution, but there can be little doubt that the clashing interests of churchman and presbyter and puritan, of King and Parliament, in which national temper was taking on a grimmer sternness of resolution, and the various churches were fighting as keenly as non-religious bodies for self-preservation, gave intensity and confidence to his opinions. It was a time when will met will, and refused to bow to sentiment or to any consideration save force. To a man, then, who believed in the supreme value of organized society, to found it on any sentiment, however "natural," must have seemed to lay its foundations too slightly. Nothing but the very instinct of self-preservation itself, with its counterpart, the fear of death, could stand the test. Only as rationally motivated, in the strongest possible sense of the term, could the social control be adequately grounded. Hobbes, then, differs from Bacon and from Grotius, whom he had more immediately in mind, not in that he considers society as less indispensable to man, but in his view of its psychological sanction. Grotius had made the source of society to be human nature itself, which would bring us to a mutual desire of society "if we needed nothing," but had reinforced this sanction of a particular instinct by the additional sanction of self-interest. Utility joins its force to that of natural law, "for the author of nature has willed us to be *singulos et infirmos*, and in need of many things for the right conduct of life that we might be the more forced (*raperemur*) to cultivate society."<sup>2</sup> Hobbes, throwing the whole weight on utility, is obliged to make the utility the greatest possible, or in other words to portray anarchy as without a redeeming feature, a state of the *homo homini lupus*. It was not primarily that he loved man less, but society more; and in his own opinion he was giving a stronger basis for society when he made it a product of intelligent self-interest.

Is man, then, according to Hobbes, naturally social? This depends upon what we mean by man, and what we mean by social. Taking men

<sup>1</sup> Works, V, 14 ff.

<sup>2</sup> De jure belli, Prolegomena, sec. 16.

as we actually find them, they are doubtless, to a certain extent, sociable. They "come together and delight in one another's company." We have the term "love," "under which is contained the love men bear to one another, or pleasure they take in one another's company, and by which nature men are said to be sociable."<sup>1</sup> "The observers of this law (*i. e.*, that every man strive to accommodate himself to the rest) may be called sociable."<sup>2</sup> "There is in men's aptness for society a diversity of nature."<sup>2</sup> There are also such emotions as pity, benevolence, compassion, and fellow-feeling.<sup>3</sup> In society the natural virtues are equity and charity. But it is one thing to say this of man in society and a very different thing to say it of man out of society, or antecedent to society. For there are other instincts of man which lead so inevitably to conflict of interests that he has much more reason to fear than to trust, and that the law of self-preservation requires "deceit and violence" as imperatively as it now requires justice and charity. If such beings seek society, it must be because the state of man without civil society is so wretched that "all men as soon as they arrive to understanding of this hateful condition, do desire, even nature itself compelling them, to be freed from this misery."<sup>4</sup> It is not because of the immediate and direct value of society as satisfying a natural impulse, but because of the immediate and indirect value of society as affording peace, and so an opportunity for the satisfaction of a great variety of impulses, that the natural man submits to control. If we bear in mind that reason is no less of the nature of man than passion, we may then say that man, on Hobbes' premises, is so compelled to society that, as Hume afterwards points out, justice, though an "artificial" virtue, is in a sense as natural as any other.

As to the other question, Is man naturally *social*? our answer must depend upon what we mean by social. That men "delight in one another's company" sounds well, until we read that "we do not therefore by nature seek society for its own sake, but that we may receive some honor or profit from it." "All society therefore is either for gain or for glory; that is not so much for love of our fellows as for love of ourselves."<sup>5</sup> And pity, which, if any, ought to be a social motion, is defined as "imagination or fiction of future calamity to ourselves proceeding from the sense of another man's calamity."<sup>6</sup> There

<sup>1</sup> English Works, IV, 48.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 139.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 43 ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, II, xvii.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 3, 5.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, 44.

can be no question, therefore, that the self, as Hobbes views it, is an exclusive ego. The value in which it measures all else is self-preservation in the barest sense.

This brings us naturally to Hobbes' psychology of desire. Will is "the last appetite in deliberating." Deliberation means the "alternate succession of appetites and aversions" which "is no less in other living creatures than in man." Appetite is the endeavor, or small beginning of motion, toward the object which causes it. "Of appetites, some are born with men, . . . the rest proceed from experience and trial of their effects." When an object helps or hinders "vital motion about the heart," it excites pleasure or pain, which stimulates the motions of approach or retirement called appetite or aversion. The objects which please or displease we then call good or evil. The fact of capital importance here is that Hobbes defines the good in terms of desire, and desire in terms of impulse. Thus the doctrine brought forward five centuries before by his countryman, Duns Scotus, was to be taken up as representing the modern conviction that *the good is not something external but a something internal*. It is not decided *for* me, but is constituted *by* me. It is measured in terms of myself, and not in terms of a nature or a deity that is external. But while Hobbes thus reflects the dawning consciousness of the internal character of value, he defines the self, by which it is measured, in very narrow terms. In the first place the rational and spiritual nature has scant recognition, for, although there are pleasures of the mind as well as of the body, "all the mind's pleasure is either glory (or to have a good opinion of one's self), or refers to glory in the end;"<sup>1</sup> and the passages already cited show that the self to which the *bonum sibi* is referred, the self as the subject of interests and desires, is viewed, so far as social relations are concerned, not as an inclusive self, in which the good of others as such is comprised as element of value, but as an exclusive ego, to which "self-preservation" does not necessarily include the preservation of home and country. It is the self of war, in which interests are exclusive, not the self of commerce, in which they are mutual. It is the atomic individual, stripped by the analytic method of the day of all its attributes save those essential to a unit of action.

Ethics, on the basis of this psychology, naturally resolves itself into the science of appetites and aversions. These differ widely, but

<sup>1</sup> English Works, II, 5.



one is so fundamental (viz., self-preservation) that all men agree on this, that peace (the means to self-preservation) is good. The "laws" of ethics are then really dictates of (egoistic) reason. They are improperly called laws, "for they are but conclusions for theorems concerning what conduceth to the conservation and defence of themselves,"<sup>1</sup> and "the sum of virtue is to be sociable with them that will be sociable, and formidable to them that will not."<sup>2</sup>

It remained for Hobbes, when he had thus got all the moral life stated in terms of such an abstract individual, to attempt to explain the terms which involve the social character of the individual. He is clear in seeing that the terms "law" and "just" have no normative social significance under such conditions, for both imply a controlling universal to which the particular is brought for judgment. He meets the difficulty differently in the case of the two concepts. "Law" of nature is used of the "dictates of reason," above cited, "but improperly," for "law is the word of him that by right hath command over others."<sup>3</sup> The real significance of the use of the term "law of nature" by Hobbes is that it points to a norm or authority that is internal, viz., self-preservation, although his conception of the self does not allow the norm to retain any social content. The term "right," as already noted, is transformed into a physical category, and for either God or man is made synonymous with "irresistible might." The term "just," finally, as bearing too inevitably the social stamp, is excluded absolutely from the state of nature, and based on the "consequences from speech in contracting."<sup>4</sup> From such particulars as are assumed as units no universal can flow except by some external act. For the process of consent, which expresses the will, is not conceived as the expression of a social relation, but as the establishing of a new universal, which shall be regarded as external. Thus Hobbes, in spite of recognizing that only consent can give authority, and in spite of his effort to state the individual's experience in terms of itself, ends with an external universal, because he conceives his individual as so particular that no internal universal is left, and as so mechanical that will means force.

##### 5. *Cumberland.*

A comparison of the conception of the individual, as it appears in the "*De Legibus Naturæ*," with that presented by Hobbes shows that

<sup>1</sup> English Works, III, 147.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, 110 f.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 147.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 73.



Cumberland's conception is enriched in two essential respects. The first of these is that in Cumberland the moral law has become internalized. Instead of being a word of command of a higher authority external to the individual, it has become a law which is written in the very nature of each human being. The second important addition is that Cumberland takes the first step in the process of the gradual recognition of the social nature of the individual by his insistence upon an active benevolence as a fundamental impulse in human nature.

Cumberland's view of the individual seems to be the resultant of three forces which were playing upon him. The first of these was the growing interest in the individual, and the increasing emphasis upon his rights and significance characteristic of the age; the second was the ethics and philosophy of the Christian church in which Cumberland was a most devout and consistent believer; and the third was the modern science views and methods which were molding the thought of the period. Let us consider (1) the way in which the interaction of these three factors determined Cumberland's problem and the method of its solution in so far as it bears upon the conception of the individual, and (2) the way in which the solution of the problem brings about a broadening of the theoretical individual (*a*) by an internalizing of the moral law, and (*b*) by the introduction of benevolent impulses.

1. It was the political, social, and religious unrest of the period which determined the central problem of both Hobbes and Cumberland—the problem of establishing some absolute foundation upon which an ordered political, moral, and religious life could be built up amid the disturbed conditions of the times. Such an absolute foundation could be reached, in their opinion, only by the establishment of some universal law, which should be binding on all individuals. Accordingly we find Hobbes and Cumberland both concerned with the attempt to establish some universally valid law.

Hobbes, starting with his simple, atomistic conception of the individual stripped of all motive forces but the one of self-interest, was able to reach no source of universal law save the civil authority, established by a contract entered into by the separate units. Consistently with this view we find Hobbes asserting that the state is the final authority in all questions, political, ethical, and religious. The state can do no wrong, because it is in itself the source of all distinctions between right and wrong. For Hobbes the good of the individual

is that which the individual desires. On this principle the good of the state can be nothing more nor less than that which the sovereign desires. Since, then, in Hobbes' favorite form of polity the sovereign and the prince are one, good and evil become the caprice or arbitrary command of the prince.

Such a theory inevitably called out the violent opposition of the church. It destroyed individual freedom of conscience as irrevocably as had the church of the Middle Ages. Hobbes had only shifted the arbitrary authority from the church to the state. It was Cumberland, the devout bishop, who formulated the ethical and religious opposition to Hobbes.

In such a doctrine as that of Hobbes, Cumberland says, "it is hard to see whether palpable falsehood, or barefaced insult against the sacred persons of princes, is most predominant."<sup>1</sup> It is palpable falsehood, because a prince is a man like other men, and must make his decisions of right and wrong after the same fashion. "For even among bad princes there is not one so consummately profligate in his mind and manners as not to submit, as not to desire, that certain of his acts should be tried by some rule different from that of his own arbitrary will and pleasure."<sup>2</sup> It is an insult for princes, because it "robs them of all praise, of all commendation due to Prudence, Wisdom and Justice, because these virtues, . . . are discerned only in such works and operations as are influenced by certain laws, derived from the nature of that subject matter about which these virtues are concerned."<sup>3</sup> Moreover, Cumberland argues, the doctrine that the state can be the ultimate source of standards of right and wrong is disproven by the fact that the civil authorities are constantly committing acts which the simplest private man knows to be unjust.

Hobbes' supposedly universal authority is thus shown not to be universal, and Cumberland finds himself face to face with the problem afresh. But in one vital point Cumberland coincides with his predecessor, and that is that, in building up any political or social theory, *the individual must be the starting point*. His problem becomes a question of how, starting with the individual as a basis, we can arrive at some universally valid moral law which shall serve as a standard alike for individuals and for states. The problem necessitates, as its

<sup>1</sup> De Legibus Naturæ, chap. 9, sec. 18. All the quotations from Cumberland are taken from the translation by John Towers, 1750.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. 9, sec. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Chap. 9, sec. 19.



most important factor, a *remodeling of the conception of the individual*, for the conclusions of Hobbes were but the logical outcome of the narrow, atomistic conception of the individual with which he had started. In Cumberland, therefore, the stress of interest is shifted from political theory to the problem of the ethical and psychological analysis of the individual.

So much for the new problem; what now of the method? Although himself an earnest believer in the revelation of the Scriptures, Cumberland expressly sets aside revelation in his attempt to establish a moral law, and uses a method of proof which he considers valid alike for skeptic and for believer. Moreover, to be just, we must keep in mind not only the machinery of the method, but the new turn given to its working. The machinery by which Cumberland gets at his universal is essentially that of the Stoics and the mediæval churchmen — the conception of right reason as "the divine order of the universe and the capacity on man's part for entering into it." Reason, unlike the other faculties of the individual, transcends the physical universe and partakes of the nature of the divine. Through reason it is possible to know the universe as God knows it, and to read its laws.

Reason is thus the universal element in the individual which gives the possibility for the derivation of a universally valid law. But the conception of the way in which reason works in the derivation of such laws is modified in Cumberland by his attempt to apply the methods of modern science to his problem. The later Stoics and the mediæval theologians had held that right reason gives to each individual a set of innate ideas that afford him definite information about the existence of God and the laws of ethics. But Cumberland confesses that he has "not arrived at so high an excess of happiness as to come at the knowledge of natural laws in so concise and compendious a way."<sup>1</sup> In accordance with the views of the physiological psychology of his period, Cumberland holds that the material for all knowledge must come originally from sense perception. The method by which the individual gets at a knowledge of the universal is the same as that by which he gets at any other piece of knowledge—an analysis of the world of nature. By this very fact the nature of the universal and the relation of the individual to the universal become materially different from the Stoic<sup>2</sup> and mediæval view. *The universal becomes,*

<sup>1</sup> Prolegomena, sec. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Cumberland's doctrine that all knowledge comes through sense perception

*not an entirely immutable external thing, but a thing which is brought to a certain degree under the control of the individual.* It is not given to the individual already made, but is discovered by him through the application of scientific methods.

2. This change in method was no slight factor in that internalizing of the moral law which was one of Cumberland's most important contributions to the movement we are tracing.

( $\alpha$ ) For the change from the purely external moral law of Hobbes to the essentially internal law of Cumberland came about, not because Cumberland's conception of what a law is differed from that of Hobbes, but because of difference as to how the moral law is  $\alpha$ ) derived,  $\beta$ ) promulgated, and  $\gamma$ ) enforced. Cumberland agrees with Hobbes in the conception of a law as "the word of command of him that hath authority over others," a conception derived from civil law. But Hobbes, starting with his simple atomistic individual, had been unable to get at a genuine "Law of Nature." That which he calls a law of nature, viz., the law which commands all men to seek peace, he is forced to admit is called a law only by a loose use of the term. It is a dictate of prudence, not a command laid upon man by a higher authority. On Hobbes' theory the only source of authority is the state, and to speak of laws which exist before the formation of the state is absurd.

$\alpha$ ) But Cumberland's individual is not entirely atomistic.<sup>1</sup> He has within him a universalistic element, right reason, which enables Cumberland, starting from the individual, to get at a universal source of authority and derive a genuine law of nature from it. In accordance with the advanced scientific views of his times, Cumberland regarded this physical universe as a system of matter in motion. Now, whenever man attempts to reason back from cause to cause in the physical system of the universe, his right reason carries him inevitably to this conclusion, "that all bodily motions are originally caused by the impressed force of the first Mover, God, and that, by the continuance of the same impressed force, such determinations are always carried

approached that of the early Stoics (Windelband, *History of Philosophy*, p. 203), but his view had none of their pantheistic turn, which loses the individual in God the universal. For Cumberland each individual was a separately existing, independent being.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. on this, and especially for Cumberland's relation to utilitarianism, E. Albee in the *Philosophical Review*, 1895.

on, according to the laws of motion."<sup>1</sup> The universal which Cumberland reaches is God, the ruler of the universe, the same universal that the Stoics and mediæval theologians had reached by a similar method. God is the source of authority, from whose word of command issue all laws. He and his laws exist from the beginning. On this basis, Hobbes' assumption of a state of nature where no laws exist because the state has not yet been formed becomes impossible. God issues the same laws for states and for individuals.

Right reason not only discloses the source of authority to each individual, but also enables each individual to discover what the word of command—or, in other words, the law of nature—given by God is. On Cumberland's view, God has written all laws in the physical system of the universe of matter and motion, of which man is a part. The law of nature can then be discovered by a study of the physical universe, including man. The first problem which arises is whether or not our sense impressions, through which we obtain all knowledge of the external universe, are to be trusted to give us adequate representations. The universe is a system of matter upon which God has impressed laws of motion. Some of these motions affect our sense organs and give rise to impressions. But our sense organs are also made by God; the laws of activity of the mind, by which our impressions are built up into ideas about the external universe, are his work, too. For these reasons our right reason concludes that "The will of God as declared in the works of creation is that the human mind should frame and put together true propositions from those apprehensions which such objects have raised in us."<sup>2</sup> It is practically Descartes' reason for trusting our sense impressions—that God would not deceive us. The most general proposition which the mind is able to frame from its observation of nature is, according to Cumberland, the law of universal benevolence. In his cumbrous phraseology, the law of nature is "that the greatest benevolence of each individual agent in the rational system, fully exercised toward all, essentially forms the happiest state which each single individual from his own free capacities and powers is capable of; and which Benevolence is, moreover, the only method or measure indispensably necessary toward effectually promoting the happiest state which each can possibly enjoy."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Prolegomena, sec. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Chap. i, sec. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, sec. 8.



The way in which Cumberland arrives at just this content for his law of nature, and the importance of it, will be considered later.

The method of derivation of the law involves the first step in making the moral law an internal one, because, while Cumberland's natural law is regarded as the word of command of a lawgiver, yet the content of the law is framed by the individual himself from a study of natural phenomena. Instead of being drawn up by some legislative body entirely external to the individual, as were Hobbes' laws, or revealed already formulated, like the law of the Reformers, Cumberland's law was in its content the product of the activity of the individual, and therefore partly within his control.

β) For a full understanding of the way in which Cumberland's law of nature is promulgated a further consideration of the implications of his principle of right reason is needed. Reason is, of course, a faculty of the individual, but right reason is not a faculty which varies from one individual to another. It is absolutely the same, whether found in God or in man. It is that faculty which gives accurate information about the external universe, and its activity brings about an exact correspondence between the ideas of the individual and the objects and events of the physical universe. "Every man is able to distinguish right reason without forming any comparison between it and his own reason, for there is one common rule whereby everyone's own reason and opinion, as well as that of others, must be tried, and that rule is the nature of things. . . . The truth, the rectitude, the reality of propositions depend entirely upon their conformity, their agreement with things themselves."<sup>1</sup> From this proposition Cumberland derives the evident corollary that "every one being who exercises right reason . . . must and ought to agree with all other beings who judge likewise by right reason about the same thing."<sup>2</sup> Upon this principle every man who bends his right reason to the understanding of the universe must inevitably arrive at the same law of nature. The method of its promulgation thus gives each individual immediate access to it, instead of making him dependent for a knowledge of its content upon the announcement of some external authority, whether it be God, through revelation, or the civil authority, through the publication of a code of laws.

The universal which Cumberland reaches in right reason is from one point of view external to the individual. It is the "nature of

<sup>1</sup>Chap. ii, sec. 5.

<sup>2</sup>Chap. ii, sec. 8.

things," the physical system of the universe, with its immutable laws. But from another point of view it is internal for the individual, it is the faculty of the mind called right reason. In Cumberland's words, the nature of things impresses itself on our minds. Now right reason may be regarded either as the nature of things or as the faculty of the mind whereby they are impressed.

The consideration of right reason as a psychological factor brings us to the fundamental difference in the psychological analyses made by Hobbes and Cumberland, which is the source of their differing conceptions of the individual. The central point in which they disagree concerns the relative value to be assigned to reason in the psychic life. Hobbes regarded reason as mere self-consistency. As a faculty it is subservient to will and impulse. We judge that good which we desire. But the whole strength of Cumberland's position lies in regarding reason as the dominating factor in consciousness, to which impulse, desire, and will are naturally subservient. Only on this view does reason contain a universalistic reference which makes it possible to use it as a basis in establishing a universal authority and deriving a universal moral law. After quoting Hobbes' view, that we first desire things and then call them good, Cumberland says: "We on the contrary say that things are first judged and determined good and then in the next place they are desired as such."<sup>1</sup> As long, therefore, as a man makes use of right reason, he cannot go wrong, for the reason determines the will, and right reason can make no mistakes. The law of right reason, which is the moral law, is accordingly one of the psychic laws of the individual, but Cumberland cannot hold that the law of right reason is the only one which determines action, because that would leave no possibility for wrong action, and that some acts are wrong he considers self-evident. It is to the conception of free will that Cumberland turns to help him out of this dilemma. "Neither nature without us nor nature within us ever did force us by an inevitable necessity to err in our judgment, and by consequence nature never did determine us to choose and act ill. . . . And therefore if we at any time either determine, desire or act anything contrary to nature, and to all the criteria or marks of truth, it must in my opinion be imputed to a precipitate rash use of our own free will."<sup>2</sup>

That it is in *will* that Cumberland finds the depraved aspect of man becomes suggestive when we remember that the impulses and

<sup>1</sup> Chap. iii, sec. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. ii, sec. 10; cf. Descartes, *Med.*, iv.



will are the purely individualistic elements in consciousness, while the reason or knowledge process is the factor which has a universalistic aspect—that which appropriates the universal to the individual. Cumberland is thus at one with Hobbes and the Reformers in regarding the purely individualistic element as evil. All three of them believed that all ethical laws emanate from some universal authority, and regarded all acts guided by this universal authority and directed toward its good as right, and all acts with a purely individualistic guidance and reference as wrong. But both Hobbes and the Reformers, in so far as the latter used the concept of authority as contrasted with the concept of faith, conceived of their universal as external to the individual. The natural individual was for them totally depraved and evil. It was only after the individual had been brought into contact with the universal that the possibility for moral action occurred. Hobbes' natural man was entirely non-moral until he came into contact with the civil authority. The natural man of the Reformers was utterly lost, except by the grace of God. In Cumberland also, as we have seen, the purely individualistic element is the evil one. It is the will of man, his desires and impulses, which are at times bad. In him also the universal element, right reason, is the good one. The great difference lies in the fact that Cumberland finds his universal element *within the individual* as well as external to him. The natural man is not entirely bad; only one aspect of him, his will, is evil, while another aspect, his right reason, is good. The laws of right and wrong are not simply prescribed to the individual by a higher authority; they are made inherent in the constitution of the individual by a higher authority. Moral control becomes not merely the control of the entire individual by an external authority. It is more essentially the control of one part of the individual by another. The moral law, instead of being an external command, becomes an element in the nature of each human being.

γ) According to the conception of a law uppermost in the minds of Cumberland and his contemporaries, the authority whose word of command the law is must enforce the word of command by penalties before it becomes truly a *law*. As Cumberland puts it, there are always "pains and penalties, as well as also privileges and immunities, annexed to laws by the authority which establishes and enacts them."<sup>1</sup> The real obligation of a law "arises from the will of some superior."<sup>2</sup> For

<sup>1</sup> Chap. v, sec. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. v, sec. 19.



Hobbes a law was a command of the sovereign enforced by penalties and rewards arbitrarily attached by him to the performance of certain acts. The Reformers had regarded God as the sovereign, and laid more stress on the penalties and rewards to be administered after death than on those of this life. Cumberland also regarded the will of God as the source of obligation, and thought the law was enforced by rewards and punishments attached by God to the actions of men :

Mankind are determined to act in conformity to the injunctions of these laws [*i. e.*, ethical laws], partly by the hope of good to arise from a submissive obedience; partly by fear of evil to follow from an insolent disobedience. . . . For the necessity which determines the human will to act, is no other than the desire of avoiding evil, so far as it appears evil to us, and on the contrary the desire of prosecuting, pursuing and attaining to good, so far as it appears good to us. . . . The whole power then of obligation lies here, that the author and maker of a law has annexed to the obedience of his laws, good, and to the disobedience of them evil, which good and evil are natural; from the view and expectation of which, mankind are influenced to prefer, in their outward behavior and deportment, actions conformable rather than contrary to the laws prescribed.<sup>1</sup>

The important point in which Cumberland's conception differs from that of Hobbes and the Reformers is indicated in the phrase, "which good and evil are *natural*." The punishments which follow evil acts are not arbitrary punishments inflicted by the state, or by God after death; they are the necessary results of evil acts according to the laws of nature. Good to the agent results, in this world, from right acts, and evil from wrong acts, as inevitably as a sensation of heat results from an application of fire to the skin — and by a law of the same type: a scientific law, Cumberland reiterates, which is as thoroughly capable of demonstration as are the laws of mathematics and physics.

Since the will of God is indicated to the individual by his own good or evil, any particular act must be judged as right or wrong by the agent, according as good or evil is expected to result to himself from the performance of the act. As Cumberland puts it, it is the divine will that mankind should be influenced by consequences, and should weigh them before acting.<sup>2</sup>

From this point of view, the immediate constraining force to obey the moral law is the fact that the happiness of the individual is entirely dependent upon obedience to the law, and it is upon this aspect of

<sup>1</sup> Chap. v, sec. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. v, sec. 22.

obligation that Cumberland lays greatest stress. He tells us that "no happiness can be hoped for or expected outside of the general happiness,"<sup>1</sup> therefore we must "pursue the common happiness as the most fruitful and beneficent parent of all private beatitudes, bliss and happiness."<sup>2</sup> Common reason directs mankind to put forth all their united social energies in tilling the prolific soil of public utility, that each may reap the plentiful increase of his own private happiness.<sup>3</sup>

The internalizing of the moral law is thus evident again in the method of its enforcement, for it is enforced by a process which takes place within the individual himself by natural law, without the intervention of any arbitrary act of an external authority. It is not primarily the law of the state, nor the will of God, which induces the individual to act in accordance with the moral law, but the fact that his own personal happiness depends upon such action. Happiness may be extrinsic to *the act*, as critics of Hedonism maintain, but it is at least internal to the *agent*, and signifies his control over his conduct. Cumberland himself states this internal aspect of the moral law from the point of view of obligation, when he says that the external obligation "ought not to take place, it being an obligation intrinsic and inherent to the law itself."<sup>4</sup>

(*b*) We have seen how Cumberland's application of scientific conceptions and methods to the problem of the derivation, promulgation, and enforcement of the moral law brought about an internalizing of the law, and made the conception of the individual richer by including ethical laws as one of his attributes. Let us now consider *a*) the way in which Cumberland arrived at universal benevolence as the content of his moral law; *β*) the importance of that content in broadening the conception of the individual; and *γ*) the conception of the relation of the individual to the universal involved in the law of benevolence.

*a*) Cumberland's criterion for the existence of a law is the presence of a system of rewards and punishments enforcing the supposed command. If, therefore, he can show that any particular line of action in this world is normally followed by good to the agent, and that any deviation from it normally results in evil, he has proved the existence of a law commanding such a line of action. When we press him for a statement as to what the good is for the individual, he has no con

<sup>1</sup> Chap. ii, sec. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. ii, sec. 13

<sup>3</sup> Chap. v, sec. 15.

<sup>4</sup> Chap. v, sec. 19.



sistent answer to give. The good is sometimes pleasure or happiness, and sometimes perfection. But a survey of man as a part of the universe reveals the fact that all acts directed toward the good of the whole result in good to the agent, while all acts directed against the good of the whole result in evil. Usually the argument takes the more general form of showing that the good of any individual member of any sort of a system depends upon the good of the whole system. If that is so, the individual can reach his own good only through acting for the good of the whole, while any act contrary to the good of the whole must necessarily result in evil to the agent, and the command to act for the good of the whole becomes a law.

The fact that the good of any individual depends upon the good of the whole can be derived from many various aspects of man — mathematical, physical, biological, physiological, and psychological.

First, the mere mathematical relation of the individual to society, of part to whole, shows it, "for the efficient cause of each single happiness necessarily inheres in the whole.<sup>1</sup> . . . Every singular part receives either advantage or loss just in the same proportion as such an universal whole is differently affected by good and evil."<sup>2</sup> The physical system of the universe reveals the same dictate of God:

The substance of the matter of every one individual, natural body, and consequently of every human body; the motions of body in general, and consequently of every human body in particular, do . . . contribute toward . . . the common good; at least so far, as each individual body is in its motions determined by the general motion of the whole system, upon which system depends the security, the continuance, the preservation of each individual. Does not then the nature of things powerfully persuade, command and enforce a studious care and concern for the common good of all mankind?<sup>3</sup>

The animal world of which man is also a member reveals the same law of benevolence. Each animal strives for only such things as are necessary for his own preservation, "leaving all that remains over and above to the use of others." More positively the instinct of self-preservation, includes as a part of itself the instinct to propagate and care for the species. "From hence it follows, that animals, the very moment they consult and provide for their own preservation and safety, at the very same moment they consult and provide for the continuance

<sup>1</sup> Chap. i, sec. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Chap. ii, sec. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Prolegomena, sec. 17.



of their species; and in the necessary consequence of things they at the same moment promote the good and happiness of all."<sup>1</sup> This does not mean that the animal consciously acts for the good of the whole. It is only another illustration of the fact that God has made the good of the whole the supreme end in nature, and has thereby shown that it ought to be the supreme end in human action. The psychic natures of animals give a stronger proof for the law of nature, which is interesting as the first statement of the principle of sympathy which became so important in the ethics of the following century. "Since impressions made by outward objects upon their senses show animals that others of the same species partake of a nature very similar to their own, these same impressions immediately passing into the brain, where they become images in the imagination, dispose and influence such animals in general, to cherish affections for their own species, similar and much alike to such affections, as, from the very same constitution of nature, they cherish for themselves."<sup>2</sup> According to this theory, if one animal sees another of the same species suffer, the fact that the image he gets of that animal is like his image of himself would prompt him to feel as if he were himself suffering and act to relieve the pain. This process is due to the simple psychological law that like images give rise to like acts.<sup>3</sup> The crudity of the psychological analysis is, of course, evident. It arises from Cumberland's determination to make the reason, which in his usage is but little more than cognition, that which alone determines action.

The physiological structure of the human being is made to offer a most interesting support to the great law of benevolence:

It is a truth . . . that in love, desire, hope, joy (but more especially when these passions are exercised about any great good) that the motion of the blood and heart, so necessary to animal life, is greatly helped and promoted . . . the animal spirits are enlivened; the whole circulation of the several juices also, and by consequence all the offices in the animal economy must be much more readily performed. . . . Now on the contrary in hatred, envy, fear, sorrow, . . . innumerable disorders follow. . . . Man then may learn from his own animal nature, and from the nature of his passions, . . . to cherish, indulge, and exercise a benevolence, as much as in us lies, an universal benevolence toward all.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Chap. ii, sec. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Spinoza, *Ethics*, Pt. III, prop. xxvii.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. ii, sec. 18.

<sup>4</sup> Chap. ii, sec. 19.

The most vital relationships of a human being, however, are not those of a physical body to other physical bodies, or of an animal to other animals, but of a rational being to other rational beings. A man as a part of the system of rational beings is much more intimately related to the other parts than man as a part of the physical system is related to its other parts. This closer relationship is better symbolized by the organic relations of the animal body than by the mathematical relation of part to whole. "Such an essential connexion, therefore, between the happiness of the whole and of all its parts, operates and influences all, just as the nourishment of each single member of the animal economy is derived from the whole mass of blood, as secerned and diffused through all the distinct several parts."<sup>1</sup> Man's psychic nature attests this. Hobbes had asserted that the individual is moved by selfish motives alone, but this assertion does not stand the test of fact. "For we cannot but observe how natural it is to hope and expect to find in mankind pity, compassion, and a sympathy . . . whereby we rejoice with them that rejoice and weep with them that weep."<sup>2</sup> This sympathy, so universally found in mankind, Cumberland speaks of as a "propensity to act"<sup>3</sup> toward the public good, or as a "passion"<sup>4</sup> which finds its satisfaction in the public good. It is an instinct implanted by God for his own ends, and is as fundamentally a part of human nature as Hobbes' principle of self-preservation.

An analysis of the process of desire, moreover, shows that the good of the whole must normally be the object of greatest desire. The tendency of all human beings to seek the good is an ultimate fact. "The mind is carried toward the appetite, the desire of good, and also to the avoidance of evil."<sup>5</sup> A rational mind has been so constituted that, as soon as it determines that an object is good, desire springs up and leads to action. But in a case where several things are judged good, the desire will follow the greatest good. It is evident "that such a good as is well known to extend its general influence to the greatest number imaginable (in which calculation the individual animal we are now speaking of is comprehended) must, upon this very account appear the greatest."<sup>6</sup> The very structure of the human mind, therefore, necessitates the seeking of the general good. And in confirma-

<sup>1</sup> Prolegomena, sec. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. ii, sec. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Prolegomena, sec. 19; chap. i, sec. 21.

<sup>4</sup> Chap. v, sec. 15.

<sup>5</sup> Chap. ii, sec. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Chap. ii, sec. 19.

tion of this analysis, we find, when we inquire into the sources of happiness for the individual, that those acts which bring greatest happiness to the individual are the acts which contribute most to the public good. Cumberland speaks of this highest happiness as "that sublime joy which naturally arises in every benevolent breast from that impressed sense excited by the happiness of others."<sup>1</sup>

Not only the greatest happiness, but also the highest perfection of the individual, rest upon acts of benevolence. We find every man endowed with natural capacities for acts which are useful to others, but not of any great advantage to himself. "Now supposing that as opportunity offers, such benevolent assistances are denied, the capacities become insignificant and vain, and only tend to the everlasting shame and disgrace of the man thus gifted. He and his capacity exactly resemble an uncultivated field, and seed rotted through neglect. For the very act itself (and we certainly do act when we serve others,) is, even as to ourselves, more healthy and much pleasanter than a downright neglect."<sup>2</sup>

To sum up :

Does not then the nature of things (and consequently God, the author of nature,) powerfully persuade, command and enforce a studious concern for the common good of all mankind—have we not a clear and full indication that such a good is possible; that it is the greatest good; that it is more intimately blended and interwoven with the private happiness of each individual than any other effect which human skill, sagacity, foresight and power can possibly produce? Do not these deep impressions imprinted on our minds by God and nature, necessarily, whether we will or no, actually promote this general good—nay even at the very time we are gratifying our brutal appetites and acting even as much as we can against such a good?<sup>3</sup>

β) The content of Cumberland's law of nature differs from Hobbes' most strikingly in being positive, while Hobbes' is negative. The condensed form of Hobbes' law of nature is, "Do not that to another which thou wouldst not have done to thyself."<sup>4</sup> It is a negative statement of the golden rule, while Cumberland's law of benevolence is a positive statement. Hobbes' law enjoins forbearance—peace toward one's fellow-men, where Cumberland's commands an active benevolence. This difference in the formulation of the two

<sup>1</sup> Chap. i, sec. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Chap. ii, sec. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. v, sec. 14.

<sup>4</sup> English Works, Vol. III, p. 144.



laws is correlated with an important difference in the psychological analysis of the individual. The only motive power which Hobbes recognized in the individual was the desire for self-preservation, which expresses itself as a fear of pain. A universal fear of harm from one's fellow-men might conceivably lead to a universal agreement to let one another alone, but it could never give rise to an active desire to assist others. Cumberland's contribution was to establish the fact that the hope of pleasure is a force as fundamental in the individual as the fear of pain. With the introduction of an active element such as the desire for pleasure, an active, outgoing impulse of benevolence in the individual, as fundamental as the impulse toward self-preservation, becomes possible. While Hobbes' individual is so simple in structure that he is moved by but one spring, the selfish impulse, Cumberland's is complicated by the introduction of a second, which moves to benevolence. Cumberland admits that the selfish impulse does exist in the individual and is of importance, but side by side with it we find active the still more important impulse of benevolence. The two classes of impulses are not fundamentally antagonistic, for the good of one individual, when not the evil of another, is good to society as a whole. In this case the selfish and benevolent impulses coincide. The selfish impulse is contrary to the law of benevolence only when it prompts acts which are harmful to others.

The recognition of the fundamental nature of the benevolent impulses is a beginning of the recognition of the social nature of the self, for it is an impulse within the self which is directed, not toward the self, but toward others.

γ) Although Cumberland takes the first step in the modern movement of thought which has resulted in a recognition of the social nature of the individual, there is much in his method of deriving the law of benevolence which savors strongly of the mediæval view of the relation of the individual to the universal. Cumberland deals with the problem of the relation of the individual to the universal principally under the form of the relation of the good of the individual to the good of society as a whole.

Underlying all the arguments to prove that the good of the whole should be made the object of endeavor for each individual is the idea that the good of the whole is in itself a higher order of good than the good of the individual. He tells us that a good known to be a good to all members of a species must by that fact appear to the individual

the greatest good.<sup>1</sup> He admits that self-preservation is the first appetite of being,<sup>2</sup> but says that a man has no right to his own preservation unless he establishes it by showing that it is essential to the public good.<sup>3</sup> The reason why it is wrong for one member of society to injure another is not because of the harm done to the individual, but because such an act is contrary to the good of the whole.<sup>4</sup> Good is granted to the individual by the divine will, in order that the whole may be benefited, and is distributed to individuals entirely with a view to the good of the whole.<sup>5</sup> In outlining his hierarchy of duties<sup>6</sup> Cumberland places first a man's duty to the common good; second, his duty to himself; third, his duty to his parents and children; and, fourth, his duty to humanity. To the modern mind his duty to the common good would be the same as his duty to humanity. But for Cumberland humanity is only the sum of the various individuals with whom a man comes into contact less closely than with his family. The good of humanity would be only the sum of the goods of those individuals. But the common good is evidently regarded as of far greater worth than the sum of individual goods.

The explanation of the fact that Cumberland regards the good of the whole as something more than the sum of the individual goods goes back to his mediæval system of thought. For him the good was not determined by the individual and his needs and desires. It was a universal attribute, determined by the nature of things, and revealed to the human understanding by right reason. The individual might partake of the good, but the fact that the individual possessed the good could be of little importance in comparison with the existence of the good itself. The thought is closely analogous to the mediæval conception of the relation between being and particular existence, as Cumberland himself points out. The "object of happiness creating acts (*i. e.* the good) cannot be considered under a more universal, a more perfect, a more delightful notion than that of the common good, for the term good is to the full as complete, comprehensive and extensive a term as the term being, and consequently comprehends all singulars under one universal."<sup>7</sup> "And from hence it follows that the extensive, infinite latitude and extent of such an object as this, has a full right to

<sup>1</sup> Chap. ii, sec. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. ii, sec. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Chap. v, sec. 45.

<sup>4</sup> Chap. i, sec. 24.

<sup>5</sup> Chap. v, sec. 10.

<sup>6</sup> Chap. i, sec. 24.

<sup>7</sup> Chap. v, sec. 13.



demand and elicit the whole energy of our most enlarged faculties, and is the complete and adequate object for the full exercise of them."<sup>1</sup> Thus the superior value of the good of the whole to the good of the individual rests on the same basis as the superior reality of being as a whole to any particular existence in the thought of the Middle Ages. In Cumberland the emphasis is still upon the universal, as it is in the Middle Ages. The individual has not yet clearly emerged as the center of reference in philosophical analysis.

But the fact that the individual was beginning to come into prominence is evident in some of Cumberland's statements about the relation between individuals and society. He often speaks as though he regarded society as nothing more than the sum of its individual members. He tells us that "the whole differs in nothing from the sum of all its parts taken together," and mentions the "sameness that exists between the parts and the whole." But more often his idea is of society as an organism of which the individual members are organs. From this standpoint society is a something more than the sum of its members, just as an organism is something more than the sum of its organs.<sup>2</sup>

The real importance of Cumberland's work, both in ethics as a whole and in the development of individuality, lies in another aspect of his theory than that which he himself considered important and emphasized. Cumberland was in spirit a thorough theologian. His great ambition was to establish his theological ethics on a basis of scientific truth. His interest was in showing that the law of benevolence is the law of God. For him all laws of nature are laws of God, and he shows that the law of benevolence is the law of nature, only because in so doing he proves that it is the law of God. He points out the existence of benevolent impulses in the individual as confirmation of the fact that the law of benevolence is the law of God. The good which follows right acts and the evil which follows wrong ones are important as the rewards and punishments which God attaches to his law. Any particular act must be judged as right or wrong by an anticipation of good or evil consequences, because good and evil consequences are the signs by which God points out right and wrong conduct to mankind.

But in the history of the development of thought, Cumberland's importance lies, not in the fact that he tried to prove that the golden rule is the dictate of God to man, but in that he tried to prove it by

<sup>1</sup> Chap. v, sec. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. vii, sec. 1.



the most advanced scientific methods of his day. The theological applications of his doctrine, which were for him of prime importance, had little effect upon the succeeding century, while the scientific facts and methods which he brought to light were those which dominated its thought. After the advance in the theory of knowledge brought about by the "Essay on the Human Understanding," the naïve realism which served Cumberland as a basis for his system was no longer possible. The external universe, therefore, offered no such direct access to a universal source of authority and law as Cumberland had found through it. The grounds for regarding the law of nature as the law of God were no longer so simple and evident. The interest in bringing out evidences of God's law in nature gave way to an interest in the laws of nature as ultimate. At the same time the recognition of the fact that laws of nature are in their last analysis the product of the activity of the human mind threw the stress more and more upon analysis of the individual consciousness.

But in spite of this shifting of emphasis, Cumberland's system contains most of the material elaborated by the thought of the succeeding period. The theological aspect of his theory readily separates itself from the natural science portion, and leaves the latter standing in close connection with the distinctly modern movement in ethics. Throwing out of court Cumberland's constant reference to the fact that the law of nature is for him the law of God, and regarding his law of nature as merely a law of nature, we have left a modern standpoint, closely allied to utilitarianism. The existence of benevolent impulses becomes not so much an indication of God's law as a fact in natural science of which ethical theories must take account. The good and evil which follow in the train of right and wrong acts are no longer God's rewards and punishments; they are merely natural consequences of the acts. Acts are guided according to consequences, not because consequences indicate God's will, but because the good or evil results to the individual are themselves sufficient motives for action. There is, therefore, contained within the shell of theological ethics in Cumberland a first attempt, and a fairly well worked out attempt, to formulate a scientific ethics based upon the analysis of the individual.

#### 6. *Locke.*

Although in his theory of knowledge Locke is so closely identified with the thought of his immediate successors as to be naturally placed

rather at the opening of the century of *Aufklärung* and intellectual emancipation than at the close of the preceding century of religious and political struggle, it is yet with this last-named movement that his conception of the individual as related to society has most in common. Indeed, Locke, as the champion of civil and religious liberty, may properly be said to present the final outcome of the seventeenth century's evolution of individuality, while his other work gave the inspiration for that freedom of thought and introspective analysis which made the individual of the eighteenth century so interesting to himself that society often seemed of minor importance.

1. The final outcome of the seventeenth century, and yet the voice of the Restoration rather than of the Commonwealth. For though the broad Puritanism of Owen may well have influenced Locke's temper, it is the spirit of a secular rather than of a religious age that speaks in the "Epistles on Toleration." The smart of personal grievance, no doubt, lends eloquence to Roger Williams and Milton. It is no wonder that it needed this to bring the principle home upon them, and it is but natural that Owen should be able to say in 1646: "I never knew one contend earnestly for a toleration of dissenters who was not one himself." But the demand for toleration in an intensely religious age almost necessarily shaped itself in the form of a demand that my truth shall not be crushed by your error. I ask for toleration because I believe that I am right in my belief, and to persecute me is to fight against the truth of God itself. It is quite a different standpoint which announces toleration itself to be "the chief characteristical mark" of the true church and asserts boldly that "every one is orthodox to himself." The liberal writers of the preceding generation are pleading primarily for liberty of conscience in the interest of religion. Locke argues rather from the standpoint of the individual's privilege to be free from dictation in matters which are solely his own concern. Church and state are two voluntary societies which a man joins for two distinct purposes, the state to obtain happiness in this world, the church to attain "happiness after this life in another world." There is this marked difference that "in all Civil Society one man's good is involved with another's; in Religious Society every man's concerns are separate, and if he err he errs at his own private cost."<sup>1</sup> The Puritan had been so impressed with the primacy of the religious obligation

<sup>1</sup> From an early paper on "The Difference between Civil and Ecclesiastical Power" (Fraser's Locke, pp. 64 f.).

that it never occurred to him to state the problem in such a purely personal and individualistic fashion. Locke says, "thou art not to punish him (a person of supposedly erroneous belief) in the things of this life because thou supposest he will be miserable in that which is to come,"<sup>1</sup> and thus assimilates the question of religious toleration to that of general non-interference in the private affairs of the individual. He had seen the nation after the strenuous rule of Puritanism settle back into the easy-going morality or open license of the Restoration and recognized the futility of enforced opinion; the conviction that nothing is to be gained for religion but reinforced the judgment that a man's future happiness is his own affair. It is on the same basis with the care of his health or his estate, and if the magistrate cannot force men to be well or to be rich, much less can he compel knowledge of the truth or acceptance of his views, since the responsibility must lie with the individual's reason and with his alone. The Reformers had appealed to God and his Word in the unhesitating conviction that any free, unbiased mind must agree with them in their deductions. Locke, with calmer outlook, sums up the lesson of two centuries of religious controversy in the position that no one can be certain that he has the truth. The new authority to which the Protestant appealed proves to be of uncertain interpretation; the responsibility is, therefore, the individual's and his alone. Only in the case of such doctrines as are directly hostile to civil society itself (in which Locke places atheism and the recognition of foreign jurisdiction) are subject to the magistrate's interference.

2. As in religious, so in political theory, Locke gives increasing recognition to the individual as such. Adopting the thought of Milton that man is "born to command," he makes the individual in the state of nature possess not merely, as with Hobbes, the right to self-preservation, but the right to punish transgressors of the law of nature. Nor does this mean merely that he has the power. He is regarded as the executor of the law of nature, which Locke, like Cumberland, conceives as sovereign in the state of nature. The individual is then not barely a physical unit, as with Hobbes. He is a subject of rights. He is a jural as well as a physical person, and as minister of the law of nature is thereby given sovereignty and authority. This idea of the law of nature as not merely that to which obedience is due, but that which, by making each man its executor, really imbues him with

<sup>1</sup> First letter concerning toleration.



its authority and constitutes him a sovereign, marks the advance of Locke beyond Cumberland and Hobbes in his conception of the individual. The law of nature makes man social, as with Cumberland, but it makes him sovereign, too. By the law of nature "common to them all, he and all the rest of mankind are one community, make up one society," but the separation "from this great and natural community" to join in a "private or particular political society" is by positive agreement.<sup>1</sup> The individual gives up his natural sovereignty that he may have the support of the whole body in the protection of his life, liberty, and property, and, though at first a certain natural pre-eminence might give tacit authority to some man without the guarantees of law, yet civil society was not complete until properly representative legislative bodies were established, "by which means every single person became subject equally with other the meanest men, to those laws which he himself as part of the legislative had established."<sup>2</sup>

In Locke's conception of this law of nature we find, as in his ethics, the older conception of law as imposed by some lawgiver. "The taking away of God, though but even in thought, dissolves all;"<sup>3</sup> we find the equality of men likewise based on the view that they are "all the servants of one sovereign master sent into the world by his order and about his business," but in his utilization of these conceptions to dignify and ennoble the individual, to invest him with "inalienable rights,"<sup>4</sup> Locke not merely gave utterance to the advanced thought of his own day; he was pleading the cause of revolutions yet to come.

3. Locke's ethical conceptions are a combination of the universalism of Cumberland as regards end and authority with the individualism of Hobbes as regards motive. The ultimate authority for the moral law is, as already stated, the divine will. The ground of divine authority is, however, not entirely arbitrary. "He has a right to do it (*i. e.*, give a rule whereby men should govern themselves); we are

<sup>1</sup> *Cf.* Civil Government, II, sec. 128.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, sec. 94.

<sup>3</sup> Letter on Toleration. This is said of human society as founded on "promises, covenants and oaths" which "can have no hold upon an atheist," but secs. 6 and 8 of the Civil Government, II, make it clear that the law of reason is a measure which God has set.

<sup>4</sup> Especially in chap. iv: "For a man not having the power of his own life, cannot by compact or his own consent enslave himself to any one."

his creatures;" but also "he has goodness and wisdom to direct our actions to what is best." The opportunity of the individual is placed by Locke, not in constituting good and evil, right and wrong, but (1) in the process of discovery and utilization of the eternal laws of God, and (2) in the motive of individual happiness through which they receive their motor power in the individual's consciousness.

As regards (1), there is no doubt that in denying the existence of any innate practical ideas and insisting that moral laws are "something that we being ignorant of may attain to the knowledge of by the use and due application of our natural faculties," Locke conceived himself to be placing morality on a rational basis, and freeing it as well from the dogmatism of authority as from that of custom. It is true that laws of morality exist independently of my choice. But so do laws of gravitation. If I can have a rational account of them, I may plan accordingly, and so control my own weal or woe. A further step is taken by Locke when he assimilates moral principles to mathematics, and declares that morality is capable of demonstration as well as mathematics: "since the precise real essence of the things moral words stand for may be perfectly known, and so the congruity and incongruity of the things themselves be certainly discovered; in which consists perfect knowledge."<sup>1</sup> Moral ideas are "archetypal." The mind then really sets its own standard for moral judgments. "If it be true in speculation, *i. e.* in idea, that murder deserves death, it will also be true in reality of any action that exists conformable to that idea of murder."<sup>2</sup> How is this to be reconciled with his other position that the moral ideas are based on the law of God? Apparently by the same principle which had done duty with Cumberland, that "reason is that law," "the candle of the Lord set up by himself in men's minds." Further, though the ideas are our own, we are not thereby making morality arbitrary, for the ideas, like those of mathematics, are conceived by Locke (however inconsistently) as sustaining certain "real" relations to each other, the discovery of which is the discovery of truth. In other words, while the standpoint of naïve realism is represented to a degree in the thought of a law already "there," and the standpoint of externalism in the thought of a law which is "given," the more internal and subjective attitude of the following epoch is seeking expression in the conception that the standard is to be found in "ideas." A controlling universal cannot yet be found in the individual, because he is still too

<sup>1</sup> Essay III, xi, 16.

<sup>2</sup> Essay IV, iv, 8.

narrow, but Locke is too just to common sense to eliminate the element of control and universality from the moral life.

(2) It is in the conception of end and motive that Locke finds opportunity to do larger justice to individualism. For he defines the end to be happiness and happiness to be satisfaction,<sup>1</sup> while good and evil are defined, as by Hobbes, as causes of pleasure or pain. Nor is it enough to say that all good is the proper object of desire in general; the good for each man is that which satisfies his particular desires.<sup>2</sup> "And therefore it was a right answer of the physician to his patient that had sore eyes:—If you have more pleasure in the taste of wine than in the use of your sight, wine is good for you; but if the pleasure of seeing be greater to you than that of drinking, wine is naught." It is this variety of palates, bodily and mental, which gives rise to variety of pursuits. For since desire is uneasiness, and the greatest uneasiness determines the will, choices will depend "for the most part" on the sources of present uneasiness.

Three questions naturally rise here: (a) Does the individual as thus determined have the possibilities of true freedom and moral life? (b) What part does the social element play in his actual impulses? and (c) What part does the social element play in the moral criterion? The answer to (a), as Green has shown so elaborately,<sup>3</sup> is by no means simple, for Locke, although he has already defined happiness as satisfaction, then says that "happiness and that alone" moves desire. Again he insists that pleasure-pain is the sole test of good and evil, and yet speaks of true measures of good and evil. In view of the variety of tastes he claims that, "if there be no prospect beyond the grave the inference is certainly right 'Let us eat and drink,' let us enjoy what we delight in." He finds the only real reason for any distinction between true and false to be the quantity of pleasure that will be awarded in the other life to the man who has been virtuous and religious. On the other hand, if we should ask Locke whether the pleas-

<sup>1</sup> His personal statement makes this clear. "Thus, I think;—It is a man's proper business to seek happiness and avoid misery. Happiness consists in what delights and contents the mind; misery in what disturbs, decomposes or torments it. . . . But here I must have a care I mistake not, for if I prefer a short pleasure to a lasting one it is plain I cross my own happiness." The "most lasting pleasures" are then named—Health, Reputation, Knowledge, Doing good, The expectation of eternal happiness in another world. (Fox-Bourne, *Life*, Vol. I, p. 164.)

<sup>2</sup> Essay II, xxi, 43 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Introduction to Hume, II, secs. 1–18.



ures and pains of the other life were to consist simply in gratifying desires, with no reference to the kind of desires to be gratified, he would doubtless have denied any such inference and refer to his statement that God and the angels are determined by what is best, where he evidently has in mind a "standard for pleasure" and not "pleasure as standard."

This brings us to ask (*b*) how Locke conceives the individual's impulses—are they egoistic, as with Hobbes, or social? His statements that we are moved only by pleasure or pain might seem to imply the former, but this really leaves the question quite undetermined as to what the impulses are, the satisfaction of which produces pleasure or pain. The state of nature is defined as "a state of peace, good-will, mutual assistance and preservation."<sup>1</sup> "The being and welfare of a man's children and friends producing constant delight in him, he is said constantly to love them," and this love, as arising from their very being or happiness, is distinguished from a pleasure or pain we may feel which is attended by a destruction of the object.<sup>2</sup> "Doing good" is one of the five great and constant pleasures of this life, "for I find the well-cooked meat I eat today does now no more delight me, . . . the perfumes I smelt yesterday now no more affect me with any pleasure; but the good turn I did yesterday, a year, seven years since, continues still to please and delight me as often as I reflect on it."<sup>3</sup> It may be fairly said, I think, that, while Locke made no attempt to emphasize the existence of social affections, he presupposed their existence.

(*c*) For the third question, viz., as to the extent to which the social good is made the criterion, there is more explicitness, though the utilitarian standard is by no means definitely formulated as final and all-sufficient. The ultimate standard is, as we have seen, the law set by God, and, as Sidgwick remarks, the two illustrations of moral principles have no evident connection with general happiness, nor is his rationale of the rules of the state of nature utilitarian, except in a latent or secondary way.<sup>4</sup> But, on the other hand, he holds that God has "by an inseparable connexion joined virtue and public happiness together;"<sup>5</sup> he is willing to test toleration by its conformity to "the law of reason whereby every one is commissioned to do good."<sup>6</sup> The fundamental law of nature is "that all as

<sup>1</sup> Civil Government, II, sec. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Essay II, xx, 5, 7.

<sup>3</sup> Fox-Bourne, Life, I, 164.

<sup>4</sup> History of Ethics, p. 177.

<sup>5</sup> Essay I, iii, 6.

<sup>6</sup> On Toleration, III, chap. ii.

much as may be should be preserved,"<sup>1</sup> and this is "the true principle to regulate our religion, politics and morals by."<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps the most interesting recognition of the social welfare as criterion, however, is found in Locke's theory of property; for this is a point where individual "rights" and social claims come most directly into mutual definition. "It is very clear," says Locke, "that God 'has given the earth to the children of men,' given it to mankind in common." But, as man's person and hands are his own, so whatever he "hath mixed his labour with" he thereby makes his property, and does not require for this any consent. In this respect, therefore, as in others, Locke's original individual is far better off than Hobbes'. But it does not follow from this that "any one may engross as much as he will. The same law of nature . . . does also bound that property too," for no one may take more than he can use to any advantage of life before it spoils: "Whatever is beyond this, is more than his share and belongs to others." This same rule applied to land as to the fruits of it, "since there was still enough, and as good left." In fact, Locke believes this same rule, "that every man should have as much as he could make use of," might hold still in the world without straitening anybody. It is only the "invention of money, and the tacit agreement of men to put a value on it," which has "introduced (by consent) larger possessions and a right to them." Inequality of possessions then rests on compact, *i. e.*, the agreement to put a value on gold and silver, "which may be hoarded up without injury to any one."<sup>3</sup> It seems clear, therefore, that Locke regards individual "rights" of property in a state of nature as clearly limited by the proviso that there is "still enough and as good left."<sup>4</sup> What, now, is the principle in civil society? Here "the laws regulate the right of property," and it might be presumed that they could, therefore, regulate it in any way conducive to the public good. But this is apparently opposed by the statement that "the supreme power cannot take from any man part of his property without his own consent;" for this, it is argued, would be to contra-

<sup>1</sup> Civil Government, II, 182 f.

<sup>2</sup> See other quotations in Curtis, Locke's Ethical Philosophy.

<sup>3</sup> Civil Government, II, chap. v, sec. 50.

<sup>4</sup> In another place Locke declares: "God has given no one of his children such a property in his peculiar portion of the things of this world, but that he has given his needy brother a right to the surplusage of his goods; so that it cannot justly be denied him when his pressing wants call for it." (Civil Government, I, 42.)

dict the purpose of government, which is the security of property. We seem to have here, therefore, a "right" irrespective of public interest. But it is evident from the context that Locke has in mind the struggle in England between King and Commons over the taxing power, for he goes on to define "his own consent" as "the consent of the majority, giving it either by themselves or by their representatives chosen by them." The "right" of property, therefore, as natural right, is limited by others' needs; as legal right, by the will of the majority;—although the cause of the subject which Locke is here pleading makes it necessary to emphasize the individual's rights rather than his duties, his inalienable sovereignty rather than the social basis of that sovereignty.

The individual has emerged from the century of political and religious storm and stress strong in the consciousness of rights. He has faced the universals which command his respect—the Church, the Leviathan, the Law of Nature—and in searching out their majesty has become conscious of his own. For they all exist through him, if not by him. In them he lifts himself above himself, and feels the dignity of the sovereign as well as the reverence of the subject. He is confident in the ability of reason to discover the controlling forces of the moral and religious life. He feels the motor forces of his inner world to be those of his own interests. He stands ready to enter on the new career of social relations and broader intellectual horizons. He loses sight of external universals and turns with growing interest to the springs of action within his breast.





UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO CONTRIBUTIONS TO PHILOSOPHY

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No. VI

# THE INDIVIDUAL AND HIS RELATION TO SOCIETY

AS REFLECTED IN BRITISH ETHICS

PART II

THE INDIVIDUAL IN SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS

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BY

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## SECTION I.

### GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LIFE AND THOUGHT OF THE CENTURY.

The great determining forces of the eighteenth century were industrial and intellectual, as those of the two preceding centuries had been religious and political. Puritanism set for the chief end of man 'to glorify God and enjoy him forever,' but the average Englishman was coming to be more and more interested in his business pursuits. Instead of daring the seas, clearing forests, suffering or inflicting persecutions for the glory of God, he was disposed rather to found colonies for purposes of trade, and to tolerate heretics if they were good neighbors and customers. Strenuous liberty was the motto of Milton. 'O, happiness, our being's end and aim' was the voice of the age of Pope; and though no doubt liberty was one of the factors that made up happiness, it was not foremost or chief. Comfort, wealth, intelligence bulked much more largely in its constitution. Not church and state but private and business relations were the centers of interest. Thought sought the criteria and motives of these in terms of the individual himself, and was scarcely conscious of any universal at all. We hear much of affections, of opinions of others, and of the usefulness of acts — little of law and duty.

The more precise nature of these industrial forces has been previously characterized,<sup>1</sup> but while they had been steadily at work during the preceding period, they had manifested themselves largely in relation to religion and politics, and were held in subjection to those more imperious interests. Now they came to expression in social and moral relations.

In the first place, they began to break down classes and introduce a new ground for social recognition. For although

<sup>1</sup> *University of Chicago Contributions to Philosophy*, No. 5.



trade was not yet so conspicuously the field for the display of genius that the rich merchant, as such, was recognized as the social equal of the landed gentry, yet the successful traders could buy land, and 'in the next generation make gentlemen,' as Defoe quaintly remarks. The bars of caste, which even the doctrine of religious equality could not break, were lowered, even if not thrown down, for the recognition of the new order.

New agencies had to be introduced to accomplish the results formerly achieved by religious and political authority. 'Subordination is sadly broken down in this age,' mourned Dr. Johnson, himself the protagonist of literary independence; 'No man now has the same authority his father had, except the gaoler.' And what were the new agencies? The egoistic sanctions of self-interest and the commercial motives of value to be received. The great statesman of the first half of the century was accustomed to ask young men entering parliament whether they were going to be saints or Romans, and though the maxim attributed to him, that 'every man has his price, may have referred on his lips to a group of associates, he apparently considered it a good working hypothesis for the politician. The instructive thing about his practice, however, was that it was simply the practical exemplification of that separation between the value of the act and the motive of the agent which has found expression in certain types of ethical theory. Walpole did not bribe men to do acts which were injurious to the public weal. He bribed them, as he said, to be honest. He was merely using much gentler and more agreeable means to secure what the religious and political zealots of the preceding age had attempted by force. He was recognizing the agent's personal liberty which had been achieved, but was estimating the agent's self in terms of commercial interests alone. Not until Pitt sounded again the note of patriotism did English politics appeal to the larger Individual, the patriotic self which had almost forgotten its own existence. For though the complaint of John Brown<sup>1</sup> may have been exaggerated by personal

<sup>1</sup> 'Love of our country is no longer felt, and except in a few minds of uncommon greatness, is extinct,' cited, Lecky, *England in the Eighteenth Century*, I., 509.

temperament, there is little question of the absorption of the time in private affairs.

Similar characteristics appear in the religious life and doctrine which may be considered together. 'Religion in England does no harm,' wrote Montesquieu, and the reasons were not far to seek. Unless under stress of extreme enthusiasm, even the most orthodox citizen is loath to interfere with the beliefs of his business associates. He is even inclined to make exceptions in favor of his neighbors to the universal applications of his dogmas. But the average Englishman of this age was not even orthodox in any vital and influential fashion. The articles and the confession might receive intellectual assent, but they no longer had significance for the age. The preachers but voiced the interests of their audiences when they forgot to preach total depravity and emphasized the moral sense, when they ignored predestination and regeneration, and dwelt rather on divine and human goodness. Omitting wholly the emotional element as 'enthusiasm,'<sup>1</sup> too tolerant or indifferent to grapple vigorously with the grander metaphysical problems which had laid hold upon the whole being of a Calvin or a Milton, they sought rather to prove Christianity 'reasonable' and to emphasize its value both for the life that now is and for that which is to come. In a word, instead of being the prophets, commissioned with authority to reprove, they were the teachers of an ethical system which they sought to commend as rational and profitable. But however valuable the virtues taught, there was little appeal to motives which rouse aspiration or enlarge the self. The values of things unseen and eternal were measured in terms of experienced pleasure rather than in terms of an enlarging life. The suggestions of possibilities yet uncomprehended, of attainment not yet achieved, which had inspired the lofty ideals and ardent endeavor of believers in supernatural religion, fell away from a religion which was as powerless and limited as it was natural and reasonable. Hence, the successive titles, 'The Reasonableness of Christianity,' 'Christianity not Mysterious,' 'Christianity as Old as Creation,' showed a tendency to remove from Christianity any elements not clearly intelligible and re-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Shaftesbury's *Letter concerning Enthusiasm*.



duce it to a system of morality, while the replies of the opponents of deism assumed the same premises as to the nature of religion. Butler, who was serious enough to see in 'nature' the same mysteries which the deists had eliminated so glibly from religion, did much to deepen the conception of the problem, though setting the solution farther off than before.

The social significance and value of religion should consist, in part at least, in this, that it lifts individuals out of egoistic isolation, or even the competitive relation of business in which the separation of personalities is necessary to the relation itself, into a unity of purpose; a purpose, however, which by its very essence reacts upon motive and feeling, to dissolve the particular self and substitute a self that is inclusive. A Paul, a Spinoza, a Schleiermacher, a Coleridge, all recognize this significance. The religion of the eighteenth century aimed undoubtedly to promote the social unity of its followers, but in making its motives internal it gave them so prudential a form that the unity was but faintly realized.

The industrial forces were doubtless in great measure responsible for another characteristic of the century which was also an important factor in its religious and moral life, namely, the general diffusion of intelligence. The new commercial interest required better roads and more frequent communication. General interchange of views brings with it better understanding and the possibility of 'sympathy'; and the new content of science and discovery, which was waiting to be popularized and become part of the general consciousness, helped forward the freedom of thought which lingered behind freedom of faith and freedom of action.

The literature of the age is too familiar to need more than a passing reference. The greatest genius and most typical figure was certainly Swift, and the aims and motives of man, as he has portrayed them in satire, merely carry the principles of some of the moralists farther than they would care to go. No sane critic would take satire for history, and yet we may find much light upon the moralists' construction of the individual by reading it in more glaring colors, though with distorted drawing. The Yahoo, with his pile of yellow stones, and the politicians of



Lilliput may tell but one side of contemporary life, but it was a side which was first coming forcefully to consciousness and was therefore bound to be reflected in a moral theory that was in touch with men. If Swift was the greatest, he was far from being a complete expositor of the motives and sentiments of his generation. Addison voiced its growing urbanity, Pope its intellectual interest in moral and religious themes, and later Richardson showed sensibility as the dominant aspect of human interest.

## SECTION II.

### THE NEW ETHICAL PROBLEM, AND THE EARLY APPEARANCE OF THE CONCEPT OF A MORAL SENSE.

If, with Hume, we divide the ethical writers of this period into those who derive moral distinctions from reason, and those who derive them from some impression or sentiment, it is evidently the latter group which best reflects the advance in the conception of the Individual and his social relations. Cudworth, Clarke, Balguy, Wollaston, Price, represented either a preceding stage in the development of the Individual or a conservative criticism upon the new doctrines. They may find inadequacies and one-sided presentations in their opponents, but it is after all in these opponents that the moving forces of the age find recognition. Intellectualism had served its end. As seen at its best in Cumberland and Locke, its service was to free the moral life from subjection to authority, to vindicate for the Individual his sovereignty over nature and his conscious participation in the laws and institutions which confronted and controlled his action. But institutions and laws were no longer supreme in British life. And yet the average man continued to get on in a fairly decent and respectable fashion with his neighbor. If he feared God less, he regarded man more than had his Puritan grandfather, and Intellectualism had no analysis to offer for the new machinery which was carrying on the social and moral system. Not until feeling and instinct had gained recognition could reason again claim its share in the moral life. Shaftesbury and Rousseau must come before Kant; Adam Smith and Mill before Green.

The first expression of the new attitude toward social and ethical problems is usually attributed to Shaftesbury. But while Shaftesbury and his more systematic disciple Hutcheson deserve credit for the extended development and formulation of the doctrines of moral sense and benevolent instincts, we find distinct statements of the essence and even of the technical term in certain divines of whom Tillotson and Barrow may be cited as examples. The transition by which an old concept is made to do duty for the new idea has an interesting illustration in Tillotson's definition of the term 'Light of Nature.'<sup>1</sup> This, with Descartes, had borne the natural meaning of discernment, or intellectual recognition. With Locke and Cumberland, reason was the corresponding principle. But Tillotson defined 'Light of Nature' as 'a natural instinct, by which I mean a secret impression upon the minds of men, whereby they are naturally carried to approve some things as good and fit, and to dislike other things as having a native evil and deformity in them.' Here the 'light' is affirmed to be an 'instinct,' and if the phrase 'approve as good' may seem to imply a judgment which has a rational element, the term 'dislike' is purely a term of feeling; while the word 'deformity' naturally suggests the æsthetic quality which plays so large a part later. The transfer of the moral categories to the realm of feeling is thus well on its way.

Much more explicit statements are found in Barrow,<sup>2</sup> and these take on additional interest from the fact that Shaftesbury was acquainted with the author and speaks of him with esteem.<sup>3</sup> The important points in Shaftesbury's account of human nature are (1) his championship of a social 'herding' instinct; (2) his claim that happiness depends upon having the generous affections strong, and that to have the private affections too strong is to be miserable; (3) the immediacy of the approval or disapproval which we pass on moral acts. This is made analogous to the æsthetic feeling, or sometimes to the more solely sensuous reactions of smell and taste. All these doc-

<sup>1</sup> "Sermon 101." *Works* (Vol. V., 273).

<sup>2</sup> Barrow's *Sermons* were published in 1685.

<sup>3</sup> *Letters of a Noble Lord to a Young Man at the University*, 1716.

trines are explicitly stated by Barrow, the first two in the following :

“Doth not nature by implanting in our constitution a love for society and aversion from solitude \* \* \* dictate unto us that our good is inseparably connected and complicated with the good of others?” “A generosity innate, which disposeth men to serve the public and promote the benefit of society.” “Even a true regard to our own private good will engage us not inordinately to pursue self-interest.”<sup>1</sup> The ‘moral sense’ (or ‘mental sense,’ as Barrow calls it) theory is stated in the following, and from the fact that the paragraph is found in at least two sermons, the doctrine was evidently a favorite with the author :

“The practice of benignity, of courtesy, of clemency, at first sight, without any discursive reflection, doth obtain approbation and applause from us ; being no less grateful and amiable to the mind than beauty to our eyes, harmony to our ears, fragrance to our smell, and sweetness to our palate ; and to the same mental sense malignity, cruelty, harshness, all kinds of uncharitable dealing, are very disgusting and loathsome.”<sup>2</sup>

### SECTION III.

#### THE INDIVIDUAL CONSTITUTED BY INSTINCTS AND FEELINGS. — SHAFTESBURY.

But although the cardinal principles of the new conception of the Individual found an earlier expression, it is no doubt to Shaftesbury that we look for a fuller characterization of the human nature of his time, and for a more direct statement of the new ethics.

##### 1. *The Primacy of Feeling.*

The foundation of the new ethics is to be sought within the Individual and more particularly in his feelings and instincts. The parallel here between Shaftesbury and Descartes is a striking one. This time it was in the sphere of morals that authority had come to be regarded as external and therefore as of questionable validity. Even admitting with Hobbes, Cumberland, and

<sup>1</sup> Sermon 62.

<sup>2</sup> Sermon 26. ‘On Love of Our Neighbor,’ repeated in Sermon 28.



Locke that the State, or the Law of Nature, or Law of God had existence and power which could be recognized by reason and motivated by self-interest, the man of integrity might well feel that the deeper springs of the moral life were undiscovered, and that morality so supported was in a parlous state. Shaftesbury, if he had not the awe which a Kant felt in the presence of the moral law, had by inheritance and training<sup>1</sup> a deep appreciation of the inwardness and spontaneity of a real moral life. As the gentleman does not look to books for his rules of courtesy, nor doubt their binding force, so the man of morality is not concerned with the external standards or motives. He finds sufficient basis within: "We cannot doubt of what passes *within ourselves*. Our passions and affections are known to us. *They* are certain, whatever the objects may be on which they are employed."<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, the feelings are not merely the most intimately known and certain data; they are the essential and most important data for ethics. "A man is by nothing so much himself as by his *temper* and *the character of his passions and affections*." Nothing would have been more abhorrent to Shaftesbury than to be associated, even in thought, with the evangelicals whose 'enthusiasm' he ridiculed. But in attaching primary importance to affections and passions he was really in accord with the religious attitude which made the 'heart' the vital test of character. The allegory of Bunyan, which reflected the subjective side of the more serious religion of the preceding generation, is almost entirely occupied with the Pilgrim's emotional states. The sermons and diaries show a similar importance attached to holy affections.

## 2. *The Subjectivity of Goodness and Virtue.*

The definitions of goodness and virtue are also in terms of subjective feeling, not in terms of objective conduct or conformity to law. "A sensible creature, is then only supposed *good*, when the good or ill of the system to which he has relation is the immediate object of some passion or affection moving

<sup>1</sup>This appears particularly in the *ἀσκήματα* or *Philosophical Regimen* recently published by Dr. Rand. In this the influence of Stoic models of self-discipline is evident.

<sup>2</sup>*Inquiry Concerning Virtue*, Bk II., Pt. 2, conclusion.

him." The conception of 'virtue,' as distinguished from that of 'good,' implies that the creature can have a notion of a public interest, that he can discern 'the good and ill toward the species or public' and then cannot merely act accordingly, but 'make worth and honesty, an object of his affection.' It is not sufficient for merit and worth that a man have social affections; "a new trial or exercise<sup>1</sup> of the heart must arise by which he loves or admires public affections."

It is to be said, however, that while defining good in subjective terms, Shaftesbury does not give the abstractly hedonistic definition of satisfaction. 'The satisfactions of the mind and the enjoyments of reason and judgment' include more than the mere hedonic tone. Nor is 'good' merely what we fancy at the moment; there is a 'real good.' 'That in which the nature of man is satisfied and can rest contented' is 'alone his good.' Shaftesbury thus opposes the nominalism of Locke by a more completely subjective criterion, rather than by an attempt to rehabilitate any abstract conception of reality.

### 3. *The Individual Naturally Social.*

We have seen how the individual and his virtue are defined. The next question is as to the content of the Individual as thus conceived. What is the nature of the Individual, and what is his relation to society? The answer will be, that while the Individual is recognized more fully as an individual than by preceding writers, Shaftesbury endeavors to give the Individual a far more social content. In this, as will appear later, his method is the converse of Mandeville. Mandeville makes all the 'social tendencies,' if such they can be called, of man the consequence of social forces. Shaftesbury starts his Individuals with a social content but makes no effort to trace this to social forces.

The question as to the Individual's relation to society, moreover, contains an ambiguity which was responsible for much subsequent confusion. Are we to understand by 'Individual,'

<sup>1</sup> The term suggests the *ασκηματα* by which Shaftesbury trained himself. Cf. Rand, *The Life, Letters and Philosophical Regimen of Anthony Cooper*, end of Sec. 18.



*any* Individual, or only the good Individual? In other words, are we asking a question in anthropology as to the attitude and behavior of 'primitive' man, or a question in ethics as to the criterion and motive of the good man? These questions are by no means clearly separated by Shaftesbury, and the liability to confusion is increased by the ambiguity in the words 'nature' and 'natural' which has played so large a part in ethical theory from the Sophists to Rousseau. As illustrative of the first or factual meaning of 'nature,' we have such phrases as 'state of nature,' *i. e.*, antecedent to organized society, and 'men naturally have a share of this combining principle,' where the assertion is that to combine with others is instinctive, not the result of deliberation and well-considered self-interest. The test of the natural in this sense would be originality. Illustrative of the second, teleological, or normative use of the term are the following: 'If anything *be natural* in any creature or in any kind 'tis that which is *preservative* of the kind itself and conducing to its welfare and support.'<sup>1</sup> "What is natural to each is its perfection."<sup>2</sup> In the case of Shaftesbury there was as a further motive for not sharply distinguishing these two uses, namely, the metaphysical optimism, which refused to admit any contradiction between the actual and the ideal.

In both the above senses Shaftesbury maintained that man was 'naturally' social. The 'herding principle and associating inclination' are innate. In opposition to the abstract individualism of Hobbes, Cumberland had made man *objectively* part of a biological and social system. Shaftesbury makes him *subjectively* such. For with Shaftesbury man not merely *is* a part of a whole; he is voluntarily so. The ties that bind him to his fellows are not external but internal. It is however in the ethical or normative sense that man's natural sociability is more fully analyzed, as Shaftesbury considers the criterion of virtue and its motivation. Passages in which the social content of the criterion is stated have been already quoted.<sup>3</sup> It is only necessary to note that here as in the case noted above in the comparison with Cumberland,<sup>4</sup> the greater subjectivism renders

<sup>1</sup> *Sensus Communis*, Pt. 3, Sec. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Misc.* 4, Ch. 2. Shaftesbury of course may have taken this from Aristotle.

<sup>3</sup> Above, p. 8 f.

<sup>4</sup> Above, p. 8.



possible a more deeply social content than systems which measure conduct solely by results, even if the standard for results be tendency to public welfare.<sup>1</sup>

#### 4. *The Egoistic and the Social in Motivation.*

More interesting, because more illustrative of the reciprocal influence of greater individualism in the 'form' of moral life and greater sociability in its content, is Shaftesbury's doctrine of motives. Of motives, for this is the turn which his individualism gives to the question, 'what obligation there is to virtue, or what reason to embrace it.' The motive presented in the *Inquiry*<sup>2</sup> seems at first sight purely hedonistic. To prove the obligation to virtue will be to prove:

I. "That to have the natural, kindly, or generous affections strong, and powerful toward the good of the public, is to have the chief means of self-enjoyment, and that to want them is certain misery and ill."

II. "That to have the private or self-affections too strong, or beyond their degree of subordinacy to the kindly and natural, is also miserable."

III. And, "That to have the unnatural affections (viz., such as are neither founded on the interest of the kind, or public; nor of the private person or creature himself) is to be miserable in the highest degree."

The line of proof consists in showing that the pleasures of mind are superior to those of the body, and that 'the mental enjoyments are either actually the very natural affections themselves in their immediate operation'; or they are the effects of those affections, such as, *e. g.*, the pleasures of sympathy or of esteem from others. All this seems purely egoistic. A man is urged to embrace virtue merely on the ground that he is thus choosing the most permanent, intense and fruitful kind of pleasure. The ground of appeal would be then purely to individual feeling, and the universal would thus be eliminated entirely from the 'obligation' or 'reason' to embrace virtue.

<sup>1</sup> In addition to the social criterion Shaftesbury also introduces a more individualistic and æsthetic standard (doubtless under Greek influence) in such phrases as 'sound,' 'proportionable,' 'intire' affection; but the latter two phrases when employed in the *Inquiry* seem to be social in meaning. They are opposed to 'partial,' or 'unequal' (unjust) affections. In other writings the æsthetic element is more pronounced in such phrases as 'numbers, harmony, and proportion,' and especially in the moralists (Pt. 3 Sec. 2), where it is maintained that beauty and good are the same.

<sup>2</sup> Bk. II, Pt. 1, Sec. 3.

But this is not by any means the whole of Shaftesbury's thought. In the first place, as already seen, the content of virtue is not for him to be defined in terms of pleasure, and so the method of getting this virtue chosen involves first of all a separation between end and motive. Just as Walpole justified bribery on the ground that he bribed men to be honest and patriotic, so this system would appeal to men's self-interest to cultivate the social affections and weal. This divorce between end and motive was not wholly satisfactory to Shaftesbury, and he attempts to correct its inadequacy in various ways. Conduct influenced solely by hope of reward or fear of punishment has 'no virtue or goodness whatsoever,' for 'the will is neither gained nor the inclination wrought upon.'<sup>1</sup> Nor can such fear or hope consist with virtue if it is either an essential or a considerable motive to an act that should have been prompted by some affection alone.<sup>2</sup> Just as a building may be so shored and screwed up on its supposedly weak side as to make it lean the other way, so would-be friends of morals 'have not been contented to show the natural advantages of virtue and honesty,' but have dwelt upon its rewards and made it mercenary. "To be brib'd only or terrify'd into an honest practice bespeaks little of real honesty or worth."<sup>3</sup> The real service which rewards and punishments may render is (a) the negative one of restraining vicious passions sufficiently to give virtuous impulses a fair chance, and (b) the positive educational functions of expressing the judgment of the community and of habituating the individual to an exercise of affections in which he may come to delight for their own sake.<sup>4</sup>

These doctrines involve an abandonment of the position that motive and act can be entirely separate. The inquiry in its main line of argument relies on the intrinsic pleasure found in virtuous affections, and it is obvious that the ultimate ground for insisting on the inseparable union of public and self-interest is largely the metaphysical optimism which cannot hold to a fundamental contradiction between part and whole.

<sup>1</sup> *Inquiry*, Bk. 1, Pt. 3, Sec. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Inquiry*, do.

<sup>3</sup> *Sensus Communis*, Pt. 2, Sec. 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Inquiry*, Bk. 1, Pt. 3, Sec. 3.



5. *The Sensus Communis as a Trans-subjective Faculty.*

But we are as yet still appealing to the Individual's feeling as motive and ground of obligation, and hence seem to make pleasure and pain the ultimate criterion. The doctrine of a 'sense,' taken in its full implication, goes beyond this criterion. It is advanced in opposition to those who would 'rate life by the number and exquisiteness of the pleasing sensations.'<sup>1</sup> It means a sense of what I owe myself and what becomes me as a human creature.<sup>2</sup> A 'right taste' must be '*formed*.'<sup>3</sup> It does not necessarily coincide with choosing what pleases; our 'better' or 'nobler self' expresses itself through a 'taste' or 'sense' of this sort.<sup>4</sup> The moral sense or right 'taste' is therefore to Shaftesbury a medium through which the objective moral universal may voice itself. It is the representative in his subjective standpoint of the objective beauty and good of the Greeks and of the objective political relationship maintained by Aristotle and Cumberland. It is that recognition of some universal which every moral theory must make in some form; but the fact that a 'taste' or 'sense' is presumptively so individualistic a canon of judgment made it easy for Shaftesbury's critics to deny that his system recognized any moral standard at all, and the ambiguity in the term 'nature' which has been noted above gave an additional point of attack. Shaftesbury's real contribution to the ethical theory of his time was his affirmation of the Individual who is inevitably social in feeling and instinct. The explanation and analysis of the sociability was reserved for others.

## SECTION IV.

## THE INDIVIDUAL AS THE OUTCOME OF EGOISM DIRECTED BY THE PRESSURE OF SOCIAL FORCES. — MANDEVILLE.

Mandeville recognized even more clearly than Shaftesbury the new Individual of the social, economic and moral world. He delighted in paradoxes based on the contradictions in standards which the new Individual suggested. The chief signifi-

<sup>1</sup> *Sensus Communis*, Pt. 3, Sec. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Advice to an Author*, Pt. 3, Sec. 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Pt. 3, Sec. 1.



cance of Mandeville for our purpose is that he regarded this new Individual as a product, to be explained by social and economic forces, not as a unit by which to explain society.

1. *The Conflicting Ideals in the Modern Individual.*

Mandeville recognizes the new Individual. Partly, it may be, from his own cynical disposition he found the individual of the modern world a more narrow and material being than the optimism of Shaftesbury had depicted. But it cannot be denied that he also discovered contradictions, overlooked by his more genial predecessor, which brought out more forcibly the character of modern economic standards and motives. Shaftesbury, in order to interpret the modern spirit and at the same time give ethical sanction to what he regarded as its most positive features, had effected a transition in the concept of virtue analogous to that made by Hobbes in the concept 'right.'<sup>1</sup> He made it stand for a power rather than for a control. Mandeville acutely points this out. "The generality of moralists and philosophers have hitherto agreed that there could be no virtue without self-denial; but a late author \* \* \* is of a contrary opinion, and imagines that men without any trouble or violence upon themselves, may be naturally virtuous." As an actual force in directing conduct the 'honor' of the 'noble' man or 'gentle' man had been far more potent than its lack of prominence in ethical writers would imply, and the fundamental affinity between the spirit of the Renaissance and that of Greek culture had made it easy for the English gentleman to appropriate as his ideal the Greek conception of harmonious development. But this as interpreted by most men of the world involved quite a different standard from that set by the religion which had furnished the ideals of the Middle Ages.

"The one bids you bear injuries with patience; the other tells you if you do not resent them, you are not fit to live. Religion commands you to leave all revenge to God; honor bids you trust your revenge to nobody but yourself, even where the law would do it for you: religion plainly forbids murder; honor openly justifies it: religion bids you not shed blood upon any account whatever; honor bids you fight for the least trifle: religion is built upon humility, and honor upon pride."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Univ. of Chicago Cont. to Philos.*, No. 5, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> *Fable of the Bees*, Vol. I., p. 162. [Edin. ed. 1772.]

Moreover, the generation of Mandeville was not merely rejecting the puritan religious standard in favor of the honor of the gentleman. It was measuring its values in more sensuous and less transcendental terms. 'Real pleasures, comforts, ease' were the goods of the new commercial life; and 'real pleasures' mean 'not those which men say are best, but such as they seem to be most pleased with.'

It was further characteristic of this, as of many other periods, that the more material standard was more frankly and unabashedly admitted for the public than for private life.

In order that a nation may be happy and flourishing, Mandeville argues, there must be both continuous and varied production. Continuous production can be secured only by the economic motive of desire for wealth on the part of the laborer; varied production, if it is to have value, implies varied wants on the part of consumers, and this is but another name for luxury. Egoistic self-interest and sensuous enjoyment are thus seen to be essential to the national weal. Reference to this public weal as a standard was, however, quite in accord with the tendencies of the contemporary ethical theories, and gave the point to the paradox, 'private vices, public benefits.' Mandeville was but stating the motives on which the statesmen relied to foster national wealth. It is beside the mark, so far as this inquiry is concerned, to consider the economic soundness of his argument, the important thing is that he formulated a contradiction involved in the changed values and ideals of the age.

## 2. *The Moral Resolved into the Merely Social.*

If 'honor' is really the standard of the new individual, then it is possible to give an explanation for both the content and the motives of morality. Honor, as viewed by Mandeville, means that part of myself which consists in what others think of me. It is then not necessary to assume any specific moral instinct in the individual. All that is needed is a regard for the praise or blame of others. It may be objected that this is but to substitute one instinct for another as the foundation of the moral life. True, but Mandeville may claim that he is using a simpler 'instinct' and one which certainly exists. Regard for the social



judgment is at least a *vera causa* in mediating the transition between the 'cosmic process' and the 'ethical process,' and Mandeville's exaggerations should not blind us to his service to social psychology in emphasizing this force. In stating the way in which the social judgment has come to enforce those particular requirements which constitute what we call virtue, Mandeville of course contrives to give just enough distortion to obscure the truth. Priests and politicians have 'invented' the scheme of praising certain acts which conduce to the good of the state and calling these virtuous. Modern social psychology must smile at the idea of 'inventing' virtue as if by conscious artifice. But if we vary the emphasis slightly, is not this what has taken place? Men of higher religious ideals and larger political sagacity have always been slightly in advance of the bulk of the people in formulating the demands of society upon the individual, and aiding the vague feeling of the group to crystallize in definite judgments.

### 3. *The Elements in Man's Alleged Sociableness.*

The same effort to explain the Individual as a product of social pressure rather than as a social unit is seen in Mandeville's account of the alleged sociableness of man. Shaftesbury had assumed a 'herding' instinct to explain the origin of society. Mandeville admits that man may be called a 'sociable creature,' but denies that this is due either to immediate instinct or to love for society. "The sociableness of man arises only from these two things, viz., the multiplicity of his desires, and the continued opposition he meets with in his endeavors to gratify them."

The framework of the structure is economic. The bones and sinews of the body politic are to be sought in the varied wants of men and in the differentiation of labor educed by these wants. If man could gratify all his wants without exertion and with no help from his fellows the complex societies of civilization would never arise. The love of society is thus rather an acquisition than a primitive affection. It is based on intelligent self-interest rather than on instinct. So far as it exists at all it is a product of society rather than its cause. Even the multi-



plicity of desires which forces man to seek the aid and company of his fellows has a social cause. It is society itself which arouses these multiform desires and brings about the mutual dependence of men upon each other. "*Men become sociable by living together in society.*"<sup>1</sup> "The most civilized people stand most in need of society, and none less than savages."<sup>2</sup> This is conceiving the social man as a product of economic conditions. Aside from this primary motive force of desires which drives man to seek the help of his fellows, the principal qualities which make man capable of society are his capacity for thought and speech, his pliability<sup>3</sup> or docility, and his longevity. It is through these that men are rendered 'governable,' and it is in being 'governable' rather than in being fond of company that the essential prerequisite for society is found. It is, upon presenting motives appealing to the intelligent self-interest of the citizens that statesmen rely in maintaining the stability of societies already founded. It is, therefore, 'what we call evil' (*i. e.*, economic motives) rather than the 'good and amiable qualities' that make man preëminently sociable.

#### 4. *The Moral as Generated from the Economic.*

Mandeville is thus able so to interpret the moral and political life of his day as to find a third view of human nature, which borrows from both puritanism and commercialism and yet differs from the theories of both Hobbes and Shaftesbury. According to puritanism and Hobbes man in a state of nature is neither moral nor social. According to Shaftesbury he is 'naturally' both. On this issue Mandeville sides with puritanism and Hobbes. He does not agree that men are 'naturally virtuous.' The agencies by which the moral and social life is actually attained, are, on the other hand, quite differently conceived in the three systems. According to puritanism, the transition is effected only by a supernatural process of conversion; according to Hobbes it is by fear of violence; according to Mandeville<sup>4</sup> it is by economic motives of advantage to be

<sup>1</sup> *Fable of the Bees*, Vol. 2, p. 157.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 150.

<sup>3</sup> Cf., 'plasticity,' or 'adaptation' in Baldwin's *Mental Development*.

<sup>4</sup> See his criticism quoted above, p. 14.

gained, or by the subtler motives of honor and pride. Puritanism reflects the belief in divine sovereignty, Hobbes the era of violence, Mandeville the age of commercialism and social influence. To the Puritan the path of virtue lay through self-denial; because he was convinced that the natural self — the self of desires for wealth, place and power — was bad. Hobbes likewise assumes a certain sort of self-surrender as the basis of society, namely the surrender of individual rights (powers). Mandeville, while availing himself of the Puritan theory of nature and virtue, and thus plausibly placing himself on the side of a higher standard of virtue than that set by Shaftesbury, avails himself also of the Hobbist motives of gain and glory as the means of socialization. Hence the self-denial required in his system is the 'apparent self-denial' involved in economic or prudential action.

#### SECTION V.

THE INDIVIDUAL ENLARGED BY THE CAPACITY TO EXPERIENCE PLEASURE IN WITNESSING OR DOING ACTS NOT YIELDING HIM PRIVATE ADVANTAGE. — HUTCHESON.

##### 1. *The Individual's Moral Sense as a New Avenue of Pleasure.*

"One man says, he has a thing made on purpose to tell him what is right and what is wrong; and that it is called a moral sense."<sup>1</sup> Such might naturally seem to be the function of a moral sense, viz., to serve as a criterion. But this is precisely what Hutcheson does not emphasize as its function. The prevailing criterion of actions in Hutcheson's system is in words just what it is in Bentham's, viz., usefulness to the public.<sup>2</sup> The function of the moral sense is rather to explain why usefulness to the public should enlist the approval of the individual — a question which apparently did not occur to Bentham. In

<sup>1</sup> Bentham, *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, Ch. II.

<sup>2</sup> In the *System*, Bk. II., Ch. 3, ii, Hutcheson affirms that "The righteousness or goodness of actions is not indeed the same notion with their tendency to universal happiness, or flowing from the desire of it. This latter is the highest species of the former." But in both *Inquiry* and *System* the tendency toward the happiness of some other than the agent — whether it be universal, or less extensive — is always prominent as the criterion.



assigning this function to the moral sense Hutcheson is more closely in accord with Barrow than with Shaftesbury. For the latter had made its function rather the negative task of disapproving unseemly acts. Hutcheson gives it a positive place, and makes it perform the service of mediating between a hedonistic psychology and the social judgments of approval and disapproval.

Hutcheson has a much more definitely psychological purpose than Shaftesbury. Like Shaftesbury, he makes the feelings and affections the essence of moral personality. Like Shaftesbury, he conceives the moral judgment in æsthetic categories. But the question as to why an individual should find pleasure in the benevolent actions of others presented itself to Hutcheson as needing a special examination. To an intuitionist our approval of benevolent actions might seem the immediate consequence of our recognition that such acts are right, but Hutcheson expressly disclaims any innate ideas or innate knowledge of right or wrong. A Mandeville might attribute all moral approvals to the craft of politicians who had persuaded men to approve acts tending to the public good, although these acts might be of no use to the individual judging; but while the social nature of the judgment impressed Hutcheson, the transition thus effected from egoism to morality seemed too palpably artificial. The explanation that acts benefiting the public must necessarily benefit us in some degree, and hence that our approval of benevolent actions springs from egoistic satisfaction, that all gratitude is a 'lively sense of favors yet to come,' seemed equally far fetched. Hutcheson therefore urges that just as we experience pleasure from our perceptions of natural good (*i. e.*, advantage) and from perceptions of beauty and harmony, so we must suppose another avenue of pleasure to account for moral approval of actions which in no way relate to our natural good. This avenue of pleasure he calls the moral sense.

Now we may smile at the simplicity of the device by which an 'occult quality,' as Hutcheson himself called it, is presented as a solution for the question. We might even consider that Mandeville's clumsy use of social psychology pointed to a more



fruitful line for further inquiry; but the fact remains that although Hutcheson's solution is itself but another statement of the prophecy, it is a far more adequate statement of the issues involved than had previously been made. The individual is still conceived in terms of feeling. His moral judgments must rest on feelings of pleasure or pain. But his pleasure and pain need not be egoistic. If there is no conception of the intricate and subtle analysis which shows the self to be social, there is at least a conclusive argument that the happiness of others can make its immediate appeal to our consciousness and find recognition in our moral approval.

2. *The Deeper Moral and Social Implication of 'Honor.'*

That the fundamental function of the theory of a moral sense is to enlarge the conception of the Individual's nature is further seen in Hutcheson's explanation of 'honor.' He is willing to give to this passion one of the highest places among the forces of human life, but he claims, as against Mandeville, that the regard for the opinion of others, evinced in the sense of honor or of shame, presupposes the existence of a moral sense. Mandeville had postulated a regard for the opinion of others as a fundamental human quality. Hutcheson replies that such a regard implies some other principle in human nature than that of self-love. For why does my pleasure and pain depend on the good opinion of others? If it be said that it is because we gain or lose by such opinion, the answer is that the feeling of loss is one thing, that of shame another. We often lose without feeling ashamed. Of course, what Mandeville and Hutcheson both have in mind is that the self has as part of its content the opinions of others. As between their interpretations one is psychologically about naïve as the other. Each postulates a faculty. The difference is that Hutcheson's explanation attempts to do justice to a deeper element in the sense of honor and shame than was perceived by Mandeville. Hutcheson points out that we do not honor the man who acts merely from regard to honor, nor do we necessarily honor the man who acts advantageously toward us, our party, or even our country, unless we suppose a love of the public on his part. Hence in honor-

ing a man we really identify ourself with the public, and a sense of honor implies a similar appeal to the public point of view. Most important of all, it is an appeal, not to the actual social judgments pronounced by public opinion, but to the judgment of a real social self, corresponding to the idea of a real public good. Honor, then, implies a true universal; it implies that the self which is here seeking recognition finds its true *Socius* only in an ideal social unity and not in the actual uttered opinions of present society.

### 3. *The Individual's Capacity for Disinterested Benevolence.*

The moral sense means a broadening of the Individual on the receptive or appreciative side. The theory of 'disinterested benevolence' means a similar broadening of the individual on the active side. In the latter, as in the former, Hutcheson supports and develops by a deeper psychological analysis what Shaftesbury had suggested. The prevalent theory of the day was undoubtedly that self-love, in open or disguised form, is the spring of all our actions. It is further to be noted that Hutcheson himself defines it as the 'principal business of the moral philosopher to shew from solid reasons that universal benevolence tends to the happiness of the benevolent; that so no apparent views of interest may counteract this natural inclination.'<sup>1</sup> The important point is that benevolence is held to be a natural inclination which cannot possibly be produced by any devices of an artificial sort. It may be counteracted by views of self-interest, but it cannot be produced by such views. Hence, if there is any such thing as benevolence at all it cannot be explained as due to self-love in open or disguised form. For 'desire does never arise from a view of obtaining that sensation of joy connected with the success or gratification of desire; otherwise the strongest desires might arise toward any trifle.'<sup>2</sup> Further, desire of the happiness of others cannot be evoked by the opinion that such a desire would be advantageous. This might make us wish to have the desire; it could not give it to us.<sup>3</sup> Otherwise we might be bribed into

<sup>1</sup> *Inquiry*, Sec. VII., ii.

<sup>2</sup> *On the Passions*, Sec. 1, p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17 f.



loving or hating, which is absurd. Suppose, however, this be granted, and the admission made that no extrinsic pleasure or pain can move us to genuine benevolence, a subtler question presents itself in the query whether it may not be because the public interest is our own, that we love the public just as we love our children because they are 'parts of ourselves.' Hutcheson's reply to this shows genuine acuteness. "How are they parts of ourselves? Not as a leg or an arm: we are not conscious of their sensations. It is love which 'makes them parts of ourselves,' therefore it does not flow from their being so before."<sup>1</sup> This is a clear recognition that the term 'self' includes far more than certain sensuous interests connected with the body, or certain exclusive interests of any sort. It may become as inclusive as the range of our affections. As pointing toward the modern psychological view of the self as not a fixed entity but a complex and organized system of desires, interests, ideals, purposes, and habits, the passage is one of the most significant in the ethical theory of the century.

## SECTION VI.

### THE PARTICULAR IMPULSES AND FEELINGS RELATED TO THE SELF. — BUTLER, JOHN CLARK.

The Individual has thus far in this period been treated mainly as a being of feelings and impulses, or of calculating in the interest of feelings, and played upon by social forces. An ethical standpoint which does fuller justice to the unity of the individual and brings the opposing claims to a temporary adjustment is taken by Butler. For in the first place he raises the controversy between benevolence and self-love to a new level by distinguishing the impulsive from the considerate disposition and action; secondly, he gives to reflection and reason its place in unifying the self and constituting the responsible aspect of the individual; and thirdly, he attempts on this basis a distinction between power and authority, between motive and obligation, which points toward a teleological basis for obligation, even though it does not reach it. This last distinction leads Butler to clear up that ambiguity in the terms 'nature' and

<sup>1</sup> *Inquiry*, Sec. II., ix.



'natural' which was found in Shaftesbury and exploited for his own argument by Mandeville. Butler's Individual is not limited to impulses and affections on the one hand, nor to reason functioning only in the calculation of material or social advantage on the other. The self is indeed the ultimate center of reference. So far the 'selfish theory' was sound; but the self is not limited to the narrow and exclusive self of gain and glory—in this the right lay with the other party. Finally, the decisive voice in determining which impulses ought to prevail in the self to be realized, and which ought to be repressed, is not a voice of impulse but a voice of reflection.

1. *The Economic Category of Interest Distinguished from the Moral and Social.*

Butler's distinction between particular affections which rest in their objects, and 'cool self-love' which considers all these particular affections as means to happiness, is familiar. For our purpose the important point is the interpretation of this distinction in terms of the conception of the Individual. The previous discussions had for the most part taken 'self' as a fixed entity. The content which men had in mind when they argued that an act was interested or disinterested, was that of material interests or of power and distinction. The element of truth which is given a mistaken interpretation in egoistic hedonism is that the Individual must freely choose his end. This involves that a given choice is made because on the whole the object sought appeals to him as most desirable, or in ordinary phrase the man does what pleases him. The strain involved in maintaining that a man does a benevolent act solely to please a material or ambitious self was severe, but this was the position taken by Mandeville, and he was but stating current political and commercial theory in exaggerated form. Shaftesbury, indeed, had argued that to have the public affections strong is to have the chief means and power of self-enjoyment, but he had conceived the individual so fully in terms of feeling that his principle might be stated, 'social pleasures are superior in quantity to non-social pleasures.' This would be to estimate the value of social affections in terms of pleasure-pain and might make it

appear that conduct was merely a choice of pleasures, a choice which might vary with individuals. To guard against such an inference Hutcheson had insisted upon the disinterestedness of benevolence. But this seemed to imply that the benevolent man either had no delight in his benevolence, or at least did not find his satisfaction in benevolence, and chose it because it satisfied him. Hutcheson seemed therefore forced to separate man's benevolence from the self. The dilemma which now confronted ethics was this. To be truly benevolent, acts must not be referred to myself. But unless I do such acts because they appeal to me and promise satisfaction, then they are not fully mine, and I am not in the fullest sense benevolent. For in the latter case the act would be either unmotivated or appeal to motives outside me. If unmotivated the act would be merely impulsive and so not ethical. If due to motives outside of me (were such a case conceivable) it would not express my character or be properly my act.

Butler met this dilemma by a distinction which on the one hand broadened the concept of the self, and on the other raised the self to a higher unity than that of feeling. He points out with great acuteness the false analogy from property which was so influential in current ethical theory. Economic interests are always liable to be conceived as mutually exclusive, and in Butler's day national economics had this conception as an implicit basis. The economic relations had not yet been made the subject of special study to such a degree that a distinction between economic value and moral value was brought to clear recognition. Like mind and matter prior to Descartes, neither was made sufficiently abstract to be clearly conceived. And as in the Middle Ages the ethical had controlled the economic, as is illustrated by conceptions of usury, so in Butler's day the economic was dominating the ethical. "People are so very much taken up with this one subject (*i. e.*, property), that they seem from it to have formed a general way of thinking, which they apply to other things that they have nothing to do with." This 'economic fallacy' leads men to confound the exclusive and competitive economic interests with the social and mutual interests of the moral sphere. They forget that the very mean-



ing of a moral life implies community of interests. They reason, "If property and happiness are one and the same thing, as by increasing the property of another you lessen your own property, so by promoting the happiness of another you must lessen your own happiness." Against such a mistaken notion it is sufficient to point out once for all that happiness means the gratification of certain impulses or desires, and that love of our neighbor is one of these. This may indeed compete with some other interest, just as an interest in wealth may compete with a desire for fame; but this is not a competition between the self and another, it is a competition within self.

This same distinction serves to correct Hutcheson's one-sidedness. Benevolence merely as impulse is not due to self-love; it may be opposed to it. But so may the excessive degree of any natural impulse. On the other hand, it is equally true that benevolence as a 'virtuous principle' and not merely a 'natural affection,' implies an endeavor, an act of will. To gratify this endeavor produces pleasure; it satisfies the self as truly as does the gratification of any other desire. Even further, such is the sovereignty of the self, such its demand that all its acts shall appear as motivated within, and so as fully its own, that 'though virtue or moral rectitude does indeed consist in affection to and pursuit of what is right and good, as such, yet \* \* \* when we sit down in a cool hour we can neither justify to ourselves this or any other pursuit till we are convinced that it will be for our happiness, or at least not contrary to it.'

It is not maintained that Butler's distinction is psychologically adequate. To say that the particular affections rest in their objects does not afford an answer to the question as to the nature of reflective desire as distinguished from these objective impulses. Nor does Butler state what part the rational self may take in constituting objects of desire. He falls back on the position that we are 'constituted' with a certain number of impulses, among which is the benevolent. But his distinctions between economic and moral interests and between the objective particular impulses and the inclusive, reflective self, were positive steps in advance.



## 2. *Reason as a Unifying Principle.*

Butler gives reason a function in unifying and controlling the various elements in the self. It is customary to think of conscience in Butler's system as a successor to the 'moral sense' of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson. But although conscience does exercise an approval and disapproval, it would be as inappropriate to suppose conscience to be merely a faculty invented for that purpose, as it would be to regard Hutcheson's 'moral sense' as such. Just as we saw that Hutcheson's 'moral sense' had as its primary function to enlarge the capacities of the self for receiving pleasure, so conscience enlarges and dignifies the self by restoring to reason a place in the conception of the individual. The moral sense writers had practically ignored the rational element in moral conduct. In the theories of Locke, Hobbes and Mandeville, reason had figured as an agency for finding means to secure pleasure or avoid uneasiness. It had in itself no part in constituting ends. Cumberland had given right reason a place of authority, but for Cumberland reason was a faculty for apprehending an objective rational order of the universe. It was not primarily an internal principle. Conscience, or the 'principle of reflection,' is in the first place, as compared with the moral sense, a rational principle. It is not of course to be identified with reason pure and simple. It may be regarded as including both a 'sentiment of the understanding' and a 'perception of the heart.' Its approval of justice, veracity, and regard to the common good is spoken of as an immediate rather than as a mediate pronouncement. But on the other hand, we have to notice that 'principle of reflection' is nearly always used as an alternative. 'Our perception of vice and ill-desert,' it is said, 'arises from, and is the result of a comparison of actions with the nature and capacities of the agent.'<sup>1</sup> We 'reflect upon our own nature'; conscience points out to us in some degree, 'what we are intended for,' and a fragment speaks of subjecting 'all my passions and affections to my reason.' All this indicates the prominence of the rational, mediate character of conscience. The refusal to identify virtue with benevolence and thus make happiness or misery the sole criterion of moral value is on its

<sup>1</sup> *Diss. on Nature of Virtue.*

negative side in accord with the above, but Butler does not explicitly say that the ground for this refusal is that this criterion would ignore the rational factor. He merely asserts that justice and veracity have intrinsic value and must not be followed or rejected on the basis of the assumed tendency to happiness or misery.

As contrasted with the function assigned to reason by Hobbes and Mandeville, this rational or reflective principle is not an agency for calculating private advantage. It is decidedly social in its implications, since it is not to be identified with self-love. Self-love may claim the primacy so far as motivation is concerned, since every act must ultimately be related to the self; but in deciding *what* self shall be furthered, or what we shall do, conscience must have the decisive voice. If 'duty and interest are perfectly coincident,' it is because man is essentially social and can therefore find his true welfare only in obedience to a reason which prescribes regard to the relations of society.

Finally, as contrasted with the right reason of Cumberland, Butler's 'reflective principle' is an internal principle of control, rather than a medium for apprehending an external and objective system of order and relations. Butler does not question the existence of such an objective system of nature, nor even the possibility of basing ethics upon it; but it is upon human nature that he bases his own system, and though he does not doubt the coincidence of results reached by the two methods, he does not rely upon the first to fix the laws for the second. The origin of our constitution may be due to God; but, having been constituted once for all, human nature henceforth exists as a law unto itself. It is autonomous.

### 3. *The Individual as Source of Moral Authority.*

Butler's distinction between power and authority is an attempt to recognize the universal aspect of the individual as against two opposing conceptions. First, as against Locke and the older school it denied that all authority must come from some external command. Man may be a law unto himself. It is highly interesting to note that Locke had reached this principle of inner authority in political theory, as being other than the



mere power with which Hobbes had endowed his units. He had made each individual 'born to command.' The political revolution had forced men to the theory of democracy. But Locke had not taken a corresponding step in ethics. God has a 'right' to impose a law because we are his creatures; the 'obligation' to obey this law is not further accounted for except through the theory of motives or sanctions. Butler does for ethics what Locke, following Milton,<sup>1</sup> had done for politics. As Locke's individual is born to command, so Butler's conscience or principle of reflection has a 'natural supremacy.' As the authority of government needs not any supernatural source in divine right, but may derive sufficient sanctity from its units, so with Butler human nature has within itself ample authority. There is indeed no such emphasis placed upon autonomy as is the case in Kant's system. There is no analysis of the will such as that by which Kant shows the authority of ends which have intrinsic and absolute worth. The term conscience may be less desirable in its suggestions than Kant's practical reason, and Butler appears more ready to assert the authority of conscience than to explain it. But making allowance for all this, it remains true that Butler conceives conscience as the unifying principle of human nature. It is by its reflection that the due place of every element and the legitimate degree of every passion or activity is settled, and hence it may not unfairly be said that its authority is virtually that which the whole must exercise over its parts, the end over the means.

Secondly, as against certain aspects of the theory of Shaftesbury, Butler's distinction between power and authority meets the criticism of Mandeville, that to make virtue 'natural' was to destroy its essential character. Shaftesbury, as noted above, had not placed all impulses upon the same footing. He had urged that in deciding what is 'natural' we must have regard to the end or welfare of the species as a whole. He had insisted on the need of due proportion. And yet he had viewed this proportion largely from an æsthetic standpoint, and in deciding what should constitute the end of the species as a whole little account is made of rational and volitional elements. The

<sup>1</sup>J. H. Tufts, *Univ. of Chicago Cont. to Philos.*, No. 5, p. 47.



nearest that he comes to a recognition of a universal to which the individual is subject is in his principle of 'taste.' Butler, by emphasizing the rational character of his reflective principle, finds a controlling principle which is universal and authoritative because it alone is competent to unify the self and speak for human nature as a whole; while at the same time it is individual because it finds its content not in external or abstract relations, but in the material of human passions and affections. When pressed as to what constitutes the obligation to obey this principle, his first reply is like that of Kant: 'Your obligation to obey this law is its being the law of your nature'; but in part perhaps out of deference to the hedonistic psychology of the time, in part it may be from recognition that reason is not in itself, if taken abstractly, a motive, he adds that the path of duty must be the path of ultimate satisfaction. "It is manifest absurdity to suppose evil prevailing finally over good."

#### 4. *Self-satisfaction a Necessity of Moral Action.*

The critique of Hutcheson undertaken by John Clarke of Hull was based upon an analysis somewhat similar to that of Butler, but with emphasis upon another point. It has also a peculiar interest in that it propounded the principle of sympathy as an explanation for the phenomena of 'disinterested benevolence.' Whether this came to the notice of Hume is uncertain, but the use of the principle is certainly worthy of remark.

First as to Clarke's theory of desire. This aims to show that Hutcheson's theories of the moral sense and of benevolent impulses may both be taken up into the hedonistic scheme. He admits freely the contention of Butler and Hutcheson that a desire for pleasure affords no explanation of the various particular impulses or appetites. 'The pleasure received by the taste [of fruit] does not arise from views of self-interest; that's nonsense to say'; and it may be equally admitted that there is an immediate pleasure felt in the contemplation of a virtuous character, and in the union of virtue and happiness. This granted, however, it is no less certain in Clarke's opinion that the man who has once experienced these pleasures will seek to have them again, and will be moved in this by self-interest.

He sees very clearly that if an action is to be mine, I must seek the object to be attained and must feel an interest in this object. "In no case can the mind be affected with a concern for the happiness of others (which is only another name for benevolence) but where *it is brought home to itself* and, some way or other, either immediately, or by consequence, *made a part of its own*, in reality or supposition."<sup>1</sup>

Clarke even turns the tables upon the advocates of disinterested benevolence, by raising the question whether God does not 'delight or take pleasure in doing good. Without this supposition I understand not, for my part, in what sense He could be called a good Being.' If it is alleged that the motive to action may not be this pleasure or delight, Clarke replies that then the act becomes a merely mechanical act or, at any rate, one which does not enlist the interest of the self, and the act of beneficence is not, in any proper sense, a benevolent act.

In the second place, as already indicated, Clarke has a brief allusion to the principle of sympathy, and he uses the principle in a way which is certainly akin to its use by Hume, although it is, to be sure, merely a hint, rather than a fully worked out theory. We have seen that Hutcheson maintained the love of parent for child to be 'antecedent to the conjunction of interest, and the cause of it, not the effect.' Clarke maintains that the interest is already there and that the identification of the parent's own welfare with that of the child is not due, as Hutcheson had claimed, to an affection on the part of the parent, but rather to a purely psychological or even physiological cause. God 'has thought fit to so mould and fashion the human mind, that the parents, by a strange and surprising sympathy, should be very deeply affected with the pleasures and pains of their offspring, receive a most wonderful satisfaction in the former and as terrible a disturbance from the latter, and so be obliged by the very principle of self-love, to take care of their issue, and provide for their happiness, in order to secure their own.'

We note here that sympathy is conceived entirely as a principle for transmitting pleasure and pain from one individual to

<sup>1</sup> John Clarke, *Foundation of Morality*; cited Vol. II., page 230 in Selby-Bigge's *British Moralists*.



Gay's individual is thus conceived as governed wholly by egoistic motives in so far as he is rational, and as lapsing into disinterested approvals only in so far as he forgets or neglects to use his reason. Love of virtue, like love of money, is acquired, and no intrinsic criterion is suggested for regarding one as superior to the other. Gay is evidently at the mercy of the analytic method. He conceives his task accomplished when he has resolved the complex into its elements, without giving any criterion to decide whether the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, or is merely equal to it.

## 2. *Association as a Synthetic Principle.*

Hartley is free from this entanglement in his method, so far as concerns the values of the moral sentiments. For although all the pleasures of sympathy and the moral sense are built up by association, or by education and imitation, from the elemental pleasures of sense, yet 'that which is prior in the order of nature is always less perfect and principal than that which is posterior, the last of two contiguous states being the end, the first the means subservient to the end.'<sup>1</sup> Psychological genesis is one thing; a rule of life is another. Further, as regards the specific problem of the relation of self-love to benevolence and the moral sense, although all such affections and approvals were 'originally founded on a sense of private happiness,' 'the selfish passions convert into benevolent ones,' 'moral pleasures more excellent in their kind than either intellectual or sensible ones' result from 'acting conformably to justice, veracity, faithfulness, etc.'<sup>2</sup> Indeed, Hartley goes so far in this direction as to adjudicate the respective claims of self-interest and self-annihilation to be the basis of morality, by a sort of euthanasia of self-interest; 'though it be impossible to begin without sensuality and sensual selfishness; \* \* \* yet we ought never to be satisfied with ourselves till we arrive at perfect self-annihilation, and the pure love of God.'<sup>3</sup> Association becomes, therefore, in

<sup>1</sup> *Observations on Man*, Pt. II., Prop. L.

<sup>2</sup> *Inquiry into the Origin of the Human Appetites and Affections showing how each arises from Association*, 1747 (in Dr. Parr's *Metaphysical Tracts*), pp. 98 f., 125, 131. I assume that this was written by Hartley.

<sup>3</sup> *Observations on Man*, Pt. II., Prop. LXVII.



Hartley's system the psychological agency for affecting the regeneration of the selfish and sensual individual. The view of puritanism and Hobbes and Mandeville as to man's original state persists tenaciously, but we now have a fourth means for rescue; association is a 'friend to grace.'

Obviously the important problem is as to the means and completeness of the transition from the sensuous and selfish individual to the moral and sympathetic member of society who pronounces approvals according to a social standard, and acts with disinterested benevolence. Hartley takes it very easily. In the case of voluntary agents who are, or may be, ministers to our happiness, we approve acts tending to promote our happiness; then we approve all similar acts and thus (?) all moral character. Or, rather, we are taught such approbation, and later see 'the reasonableness of annexing such dispositions to certain particular acts of our own and others.' That this would explain at best only the relatively unreflective judgments, and would fail utterly in the case of the individual who was shrewd enough to analyze his reasons for approval, seems to have escaped Hartley entirely, owing perhaps to his own placid and genial disposition. His attempt to account for the normative value implied in the term 'merit' can be regarded only as a curiosity. "Whoever performs an action with a view to obtain some certain end hath a right to the end for which such action was pursued: and consequently every action merits that for the acquiring which it was first undertaken." "Merit therefore is the right we have to the approbation of others from our voluntarily contributing to their happiness."<sup>1</sup> The difference between a right and a claim, between a social and an individual attitude, has evidently not occurred to the genial author. To resolve such normative and universal judgments as those of morality and justice into simple elements needed a subtler genius, and a wider vision for the forces of human nature. Such a genius and vision were combined in David Hume.

<sup>1</sup> *Inquiry*, Sec. IV.

## SECTION VIII.

THE MORAL AND SOCIAL INDIVIDUAL EXPLAINED BY THE  
PRINCIPLE OF SYMPATHY. HUME.1. *The Two-fold Hume; Method versus Material. The Individual as Egoistic or as Social.*

In Hume we have what is so often seen in a great thinker, the effort to make an inadequate principle cope with the material which his genius can but recognize. A born psychologist, seized by the brilliant idea of an 'attempt to introduce the experimental method of reasoning into moral subjects,' convinced that the true path of science lay in 'explaining all effects from the simplest and fewest causes,' he seeks to analyze human nature into its elements and discover the moving forces. For the intellectual life these prove to be impressions and ideas, acting according to laws of association or mental 'attraction.' In the moral life the chief phenomena to be explained were (1) the distinctions made in calling acts good or bad, virtuous or vicious; (2) the fact of social control or justice, and the closely connected fact of authority and duty; (3) the motor forces of the moral man, especially of the acts called benevolent. Into what simplest elements could all these be resolved? Impressions of pain or pleasure and corresponding ideas, or fainter copies, would naturally offer themselves as the ultimate atoms. Then good and evil = pleasure and pain; virtue = conduct associated with pleasure to the public, which in turn may become associated with my pleasure by arbitrary law of authority (Locke) or by habit and education (Mandeville). Justice = control of the individual in the interest of the majority, and therefore an arrangement for increasing ultimately my pleasure through furnishing security and protection for property. Duty or obligation = a constraining motive, *i. e.*, an impression or idea of pleasure or pain. Finally, desire = uneasiness caused by idea of pleasure not at present enjoyed, and benevolence = desire of a pleasure to be obtained by acts which produce enjoyment in others. Here was an analysis already provided in its main features by Hobbes, Locke, and Mandeville, and lending

itself easily to Hume's principles of association. His main achievement in the working out of this analysis was his introduction of 'sympathy' as the machinery by which Hutcheson's moral sense might be reduced to more consistent psychological terms, and the social judgments and affections be given as subjective and individual an interpretation as the world of matter and force had found in the former part of the treatise. Sympathy does for the emotional life what custom does for the intellectual. It gives the vividness of feeling (*i. e.*, belief in the anticipated effect — pain at the suffering of another) to the mere image or idea — in the one case, the image of the expected consequent, in the other the image of pain. So far, Hume the analytical psychologist, to whom Green devoted his unsparing criticism.

But there is another Hume, the genial man of the world, whose powers of observation cannot be entirely controlled by the brilliant simplicity of his theory, and who is frequently introducing material which suggests or enforces a theory more adequate to the social forces of his day, even if he never rises to the height of a theory that could do justice to the sense of duty or to self-forgetting enthusiasm for the public weal. The latter Hume is more explicitly manifest in the *Enquiry* than in the *Treatise*, but the antithesis between method and subject-matter reveals itself frequently in the earlier work. We shall consider this antithesis in the account of good and virtue, of sympathy, of justice and of benevolence.

## 2. *The Conflict in the Account of Good and Virtue.*

Good and evil are other terms for pleasure and pain. This first reduction is easy. But 'good' means not merely (*a*) private good, my own present or anticipated pleasure, but also (*b*) public good. This social meaning had been recognized by the utilitarianism which had appeared in nearly all writers since Cumberland. Locke, Mandeville, Shaftesbury, Hutcheson and Gay, had recognized this as the primary import of 'moral' good or virtue. The problem lay in the transition from this public good to private pleasure. Locke had sought it through the identification by the individual of public happiness with



his own advantage, and in part through the 'will and power of the lawmaker' in the enforcement of the law. Mandeville had effected the transition by the artifices of priests and politicians. Hutcheson had insisted on the public implication as too definitely disinterested to be capable of reduction to private pleasure by any hitherto recognized avenue, and evoked the faculty of the moral sense as a new susceptibility to pleasure or pain. Hume, on the one hand, accepts and even emphasizes the disinterested character of the moral judgment as such, while on the other, in obedience to his method, he seeks to reduce it to a form of pleasure and pain. Here comes the inevitable contradiction. Virtue presupposes a reference to the public. But the public good as such is merely an 'idea'; it is not an impression, and unless it can become an impression, *i. e.*, can be felt as well as perceived or imagined, it cannot be valued by *me*. It can neither stir my emotion nor kindle my desire, nor even be called 'good.'

To bring out this contradiction more in detail we note, first, the passages illustrating the public reference of all moral judgments. The very language of morals, Hume maintains, implies another than the individual standpoint. If one uses such epithets as "vicious or odious or depraved, he speaks another language and expresses sentiments, in which he expects all his audience are to concur with him. He must here, therefore, depart from his private and particular situation, and must choose a point of view common to him with others."<sup>1</sup> This social language in turn rests upon a social feeling. "'Tis only when a character is considered in general, without reference to our particular interest, that it causes such a feeling or sentiment as denominates it morally good or evil."<sup>2</sup> Here the necessity of the social standpoint is asserted. But it is not sufficient that a character 'be considered in general' in order that it may be pronounced good or bad. If the 'consideration' were merely intellectual or by the 'reason' we could assign no moral stamp. Reason might decide that the character in question was advantageous to the public, but that in itself would be a merely intellectual

<sup>1</sup> *Enquiry*, Sec. IX., pt. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Treatise*, Bk. III., pt. I., sec. II.

proposition — a relation between ‘ideas.’ Value must be *felt*, and the value which we call moral good must therefore be a feeling:

“We do not infer a character to be virtuous because it pleases; but in feeling that it pleases after such a particular manner, we in effect feel that it is virtuous;” or, more emphatically still, “it lies in itself, not in the object. So that when you pronounce any action or character to be vicious, you mean nothing, but that from the constitution of your nature you have a feeling or sentiment of blame from the contemplation of it. Vice and virtue, therefore, may be compared to sounds, colors, heat and cold, which, according to modern Philosophy, are not qualities in objects but perceptions in mind.”

The public reference has thus become merged in a feeling of pleasure. As a feeling it is *my* pleasure and not the public’s. This is the price it must pay in being converted from an idea into an impression. But Hume seeks to save the public reference by the qualifying phrase ‘pleases after such a particular manner.’ If now we raise the old question of Socrates, can one pleasure differ from another except in the more or the less? we shall find Hume facing the following dilemma: moral distinctions are either merely a more or less intense pleasure or pain, or they require us to believe that they are part of a mental state which cannot be reduced to bare pleasure-pain quality. The first alternative contradicts the assertion of their disinterested public reference; the second implies a ground of preference between pleasures which is not itself pleasure-pain, and therefore is fatal to the reduction of the moral sentiment to bare feeling. Hume’s method of meeting the dilemma is the assertion that there are different kinds of pleasures, and that the particular kind of pleasure of which we are in search here is the pleasure communicated through sympathy.

### 3. *The Conflict in the Account of Sympathy.*

The pleasure communicated *through* sympathy — not the pleasure *of* sympathy. These are two very different conceptions, for the antithesis in Hume’s system appears strikingly in the double meaning of the term sympathy. In the *Treatise* it



is not an emotion but a process. In the *Enquiry* it is sometimes a process but is also either an emotion or an impulse. Sympathy as a process or law of relation is parallel to processes of association or mental 'attraction.' It is conceived in equally mechanical terms, and the tendency of modern psychology is to find a physiological statement for both.

"The minds of all men are similar in their feelings and operations, nor can any one be actuated by any affection, of which all others are not, in some degree, susceptible. As in strings equally wound up, the motion of one communicates itself to the rest; so all the affections readily pass from one person to another, and become correspondent movements in every human creature."<sup>1</sup>

The more exact analogue of sympathy is 'custom,' for sympathy does for the emotional life what custom does for the intellectual. It gives the vividness of feeling to the mere image or 'idea.' "When we sympathize with the passions and sentiments of others, these movements appear at first in our minds as mere ideas, and are conceived to belong to another person. 'Tis also evident that the ideas of the affections of others are converted into the very impressions they represent."<sup>2</sup>

The process in question is that described by Spinoza as 'imitatio affectuum.' It is based on a physiological or psychological susceptibility to environing conditions, and evidently does not necessarily involve any regard for the welfare of others.

I may be pained by my neighbor's misery, if I am so unfortunate as to see it: but on Hume's theory there are two ways of relieving the pain. I may assist my neighbor, or I may turn my back and divert myself; and there is no reason, in Hume's psychology, why the latter would not be as effective as the former. The answer to the question, which way of relief I should follow, would depend on which were most convenient and expeditious. If to relieve the other's misery requires sacrifice of some other pleasure, while to turn my back requires no sacrifice, there is nothing in the imitation of emotions which calls for the former course.

<sup>1</sup> *Treatise*, Bk. III., pt. III., sec. I.

<sup>2</sup> *Treatise*, Bk. II., pt. I., sec. XI.



This 'sympathy' of the *Treatise* is undoubtedly a fact of social psychology. No one who has watched the mobile face of a child, as it responds to the play of emotions in the surrounding company, will question its value as affording a basis for intelligent and vivid appreciation of another's situation. The modern psychologist who regards the moral self as the product of social forces will find a distinct advance in the *Treatise* over the standpoint of Mandeville, who struck out this line of inquiry. Mandeville's Individual is composed as follows: (a) Self-interest; (b) susceptibility to the opinions of others through honor and shame. Hume's, in the *Treatise*, is composed of (a) self-interest; (b) susceptibility to the opinions of others through honor and shame, as with Mandeville; (c) psychological responsiveness to the emotional conditions of others. The social forces have thus an additional avenue of influence upon the Individual, and the Individual is not quite the bare abstraction of the earlier writer. But, granting all this, have we told the whole story of human nature when we have fitted out the Individual with the three capacities noted above? As a matter of fact, is man so indifferent to the welfare of others, except as passively experiencing pleasure and pain from their emotions, that he will as readily turn his back as reach out his hand? The demand for simplicity which was uppermost in the *Treatise* would lead toward considering the above analysis as adequate. Hume, the observer, decides otherwise in the *Enquiry*.

The *Enquiry*, to be sure, employs sympathy as a name for 'contagion' or imitation of emotions,<sup>1</sup> but it also employs the same term to denote a very different psychosis, viz., an impulse or even a desire. It is a 'concern for the interest of our species,' 'fainter than our concern for ourselves.' It is used as a synonym for 'benevolence' or 'humanity,' and these are one or all in various connections referred to as a 'propensity to the good to mankind,' a 'feeling for the happiness of mankind and a resentment of their misery.' The 'merit ascribed to the social virtues \* \* \* arises chiefly from that regard which the natural sentiment of benevolence engages us to pay.' It is 'the

<sup>1</sup> Especially the illustrations, pp. 208 ff. (Green and Grose.)

benevolent principles of our frame,' the 'principles of humanity and sympathy' that engage us on the side of the social virtues. "Where is the difficulty in conceiving \* \* \* that from the original frame of our temper we may feel a desire of another's happiness or good?"<sup>1</sup> Many of these expressions, especially if we were to view them in connection with the illustrations referred to above, might easily be regarded as due to an unconscious employment of the term sympathy in its more usual significance, where it almost invariably has a social and moral content; or perhaps they might even be considered as a device similar to that employed by Hume in explaining our belief in an external world, where he frankly announces that he will call the content of consciousness, '*object* or '*perception* according as it shall seem best to suit my purpose,' since he is accounting for the 'opinions and belief of the vulgar.' So it might seem that Hume was here using sympathy now as an emotion, and now as an impulse or desire, and again as a process, in order to bring all the common phenomena of moral sympathy under the explanation of original or 'contagious' pleasure-pain. This appears to be Green's view when he says that in these passages (in which sympathy is opposed to self-love), "Advantage is taken of the ambiguity between 'emotion' and 'desire,' covered by the term 'passion.' That there are sympathetic *emotions* — pleasures occasioned by the pleasure of others — is no doubt as cardinal a point in Hume's system as that all *desire* is for pleasure to self."<sup>2</sup> But there are two grounds which speak for the view that another tendency in Hume's thought is here honestly forcing its way from mere incidental reference in the *Treatise* to a definitely maintained principle in the *Enquiry*, and in the face of the evidence it seems arbitrary to say a 'desire not founded on pleasure \* \* \* was in too direct contradiction to the first principles of his theory to be acquiesced in.' Is it impossible to suppose that he had modified some of his 'first principles,' or, at least had come to maintain others which a later critic might see to be contradictory to those 'first' principles?<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Pp. 214 ff., 259, 271.

<sup>2</sup> Green, *Works*, I., 351.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* Cf. however Green's note on same page.

The two grounds for this supposition are, first, the criticisms upon the tendency to undue simplifying,<sup>1</sup> and secondly, the polemic against the reduction of all impulses or desires to self-love. The first of these tendencies may well have been due to the wider reflection of the maturer man; the second seems to have been due to the influence of Butler, at least so far as its psychological form is concerned.

#### 4. *The Conflict in the Account of Justice.*

Hume's analysis of justice presents the two tendencies of his thought in a peculiarly striking form. The discussion in the *Treatise* starts with the inquiry as to whether justice is a natural or an artificial virtue. From the standpoint of preceding discussions by Hobbes and Cumberland, this was equivalent to asking whether the sanctions of justice and its correlate, rights, were to be sought in the (egoistic) individual, or in a rational and social order of which the individual is inevitably a member. Hobbes consistently denied social control to his individual units and made rights = powers.<sup>2</sup> Shaftesbury, while not treating justice in detail, had sought to reassert the natural character of the 'love of justice,'<sup>3</sup> and had in general identified the 'just' with the 'right' as depending on 'equal' affections. Hume reiterates with Shaftesbury that the test of virtue must be in the affections or motives which prompt the acts, insists that love of justice is the only motive which can make an action just, and then inquires how 'justice' can have acquired such a value as to make it a motive. To Hume as analyst, value can mean only pleasure; the value of justice must be either its egoistic advantage, or its pleasure on the general view through sympathy. But an act performed for egoistic pleasure would not be just. On the other hand, an act performed solely to give pleasure on the general view would not give such a pleasure; it would be merely flattery; and therefore, since it would fail to gain its end, could not have the value of a 'virtue' (*i. e.*, of pleasing after a particular manner). What impulse can there be found in 'natural' man which would lead him to

<sup>1</sup> *Essays*, Green and Grose ed., pp. 269-272.

<sup>2</sup> See *Univ. of Chicago Cont. to Phil.*, Vol. I., No. 5, pp. 19-21, 27.

<sup>3</sup> *Moralists*, Pt. III., Sect. 2



practice justice before society has come to value it? It is easy for Hume to show that neither private self-assertion nor emotional benevolence to individuals would result in justice, and "there is no such passion in human minds as the love of mankind, merely as such."

It is, therefore, not natural impulse, but a recognition of the value of society, for which justice is an indispensable foundation, that gives justice its value. Society creates the capacity for its appreciation; and society, in turn, though originally produced by sex and family impulses, is maintained because of its own value. Hume does not definitely discuss the impulse of resentment which Shaftesbury had alleged to imply a demand for justice. Hume might well have said, however, that while resentment does stand for defense against invasion upon an individual's personality or interests, it is only when the individual socializes his attitude that resentment becomes a demand for justice, and by hypothesis we are as yet considering man antecedent to society. Hume, the analyst, has thus made out his case that justice is an 'artificial,' not a 'natural virtue,' and therefore has apparently succeeded in applying his method to a fact which seems to resist stubbornly any resolution into units of pleasure, either private or sympathetic.

But there are frequent indications that Hume regards his labored analysis as itself an 'artificial' process. The rules of justice may be called 'Laws of Nature,' 'if by natural we understand what is common in any species, or even if we confine it to mean what is inseparable from the species,'<sup>1</sup> and the *Enquiry* holds that 'it seems vain to dispute whether justice is natural or not.' For, as already noted, the only means by which Hume could prove justice not to be a natural virtue was by showing that it was not to be found in man apart from society. He recognizes, however, that a state of nature prior to society is a 'mere philosophical fiction, which never had and never could have any reality.' It is merely a device for considering separately the two parts of human nature, viz., 'the affections and understanding.' In other words, Shaftesbury, as was pointed out, defined the ethical individual in terms of

<sup>1</sup> *Treatise*, III., II., 1.

affections; Hume shows that at least one of the ethical virtues implies other elements.

Recognition of the difficulty in resolving all regard for justice into terms of individual pleasure and pain is seen also in Hume's resort to the device of 'general rules.' The law has been previously laid down that 'our sense of duty (*i. e.*, our pleasure or pain) always follows the common and natural course of our passions.' These passions, in turn, whether of self-interest or of kindness, are always directed by particular motives. They would lead me to give an estate to my friend or to the poor; justice as often decides for my enemy, or for the rich. How is it that the ordinary rules of morality are here superseded? Because the 'natural' avidity or partiality of men would produce 'an infinite confusion in human society.' Hence, men 'have agreed to restrain themselves by general rules.' Agreement 'to restrain themselves by general rules' reminds us of Hobbes's contract by which men establish a sovereign who determines justice. It is no doubt a highly artificial method of explaining the transition from the self of merely particular impulses with corresponding 'obligations' (*i. e.*, pleasures and pains) to the social self who is a member of a whole, and therefore may claim 'rights' and recognize authority by virtue of his membership.<sup>1</sup> And yet it certainly is less completely external than Hobbes's account, and it does signify an effort to recognize a social whole which is greater than the sum of its parts. The happiness of mankind, 'raised by the social virtue of justice and its subdivisions,' may be compared to the building of a vault, where each individual stone would of itself fall to the ground; nor is the whole fabric supported but by the mutual assistance and combination of its corresponding parts.'<sup>2</sup>

'General rules' appear again in the explanation of the authority of government. If, as Hume has stated, political authority was established by a sort of convention to secure the individual interests of the subject, does its authority cease the

<sup>1</sup> Hume admits the helplessness of the situation if a 'sensible knave' is shrewd enough to agree that honesty is the best policy as a general rule, and at the same time takes advantage of all the exceptions. *Enquiry*, Sec. IX., Pt. II,

<sup>2</sup> *Enquiry*, App. III.



instant it ceases to be of advantage to a given individual? In other matters we say: "The cause ceases; the effect must cease also." The 'natural obligation' to allegiance (*i. e.*, self-interest) does indeed cease when the advantage ceases, but the 'moral' obligation remains, because 'men are mightily addicted to general ruies.'<sup>1</sup> Here a sort of moral inertia or custom is used to explain conduct at variance with a purely individualistic theory of authority.

Finally, we notice Hume's tendency to a less individualistic theory of justice and political authorities in the use of the terms 'public good' and 'public interest' in the *Treatise*, and in the more explicit declarations in the *Enquiry* that the foundation of justice is the 'well-being of mankind and the existence of society.' The terms themselves, 'public interest,' and the like, might conceivably mean merely the sum of the egoistic interests of the individuals who compose the public. The decisive and important questions are, whether the observance of justice is merely a means to private pleasure, or is itself a factor in well-being; whether society is merely an instrument for increasing private happiness, or is itself a good because of its enlarging and uplifting character; whether 'utility,' which is called the foundation for virtue, is to be measured in terms of pleasure and pain without regard to quality, or whether progress in intelligence, in humanity, and in regard to the good of the community is itself a desirable end.

In answer to these questions it must be admitted that Hume does insist that justice and society owe their origin to self-interest of an egoistic sort. He expressly states that although justice favors public interest, this very fact proves its artificial character, since men 'naturally' have no such regard. But, on the other hand, he recognizes that society adds a new content to human satisfaction. Men by their early education in society not only 'become sensible of the infinite advantages that result from it,' but 'have besides acquired a new affection to company and conversation.'<sup>2</sup> In the *Enquiry* he habitually uses language which implies that 'utility' is measured in social terms.

<sup>1</sup> *Treatise*, Bk. III., Pt. II., Sec. IX.

<sup>2</sup> *Treatise*, Bk. III., Pt. II., Sec. II.



Happiness and 'perfection' are dependent upon justice. 'Mutual trust and confidence,' 'the intercourse and social state of mankind,' are made its end.<sup>1</sup> 'What injures the community, without hurting any individual,'<sup>2</sup> is a phrase which certainly implies that the community interest is more than the mere algebraic sum of private interests. I conclude then that while we may not attribute to Hume any such conception of the dignity of personality secured only through justice as appears in later thought, it would be unfair to charge him with a purely individualistic conception of public interest and of justice.

##### 5. *The Conflict in the Account of Benevolence.*

The dominant theory of desire in the *Treatise* is that 'the mind by an original instinct tends to unite itself with the good and avoid the evil,' and that good and evil are 'in other words pain and pleasure.'<sup>3</sup> "'Tis from the prospect of pain or pleasure that the aversion or propensity arises toward any object."<sup>4</sup> This is maintained as the decisive factor in the controversy over the claims of reason *versus* a moral sense. Reason can neither cause nor control actions. It 'is and ought only to be the slave of the passions.' The theory of obligation is stated consistently in terms of pleasure and pain: "When any action or quality of the mind pleases us *after a certain manner* we say it is virtuous; and when the neglect or non-performance of it, displeases us *after a like manner*, we say that we lie under an obligation to perform it." "It would be absurd, therefore, to will any new obligation, that is, any new sentiment of pain or pleasure."<sup>5</sup> The 'natural obligation' of allegiance to government is due to interest; the 'moral obligation' (*i. e.*, feeling of pain incurred), is due to sympathetic participation in the pleasure and pain of the public whose interest is subserved by government.<sup>6</sup> So too in the *Enquiry* he will consider our 'interested obligation' to virtue. It will appear that virtue "talks

<sup>1</sup> Sec. III., Pt. II.

<sup>2</sup> App. III.

<sup>3</sup> Bk. II., Pt. III., Sec. 9.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* Sec. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Bk. III., Pt. II., Sec. 5.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, Sec. 8.

not of suffering and self-denial, \* \* \* her sole purpose is to make her votaries and all mankind \* \* \* cheerful and happy." Nor let any suppose that 'social' sentiments will interfere with 'selfish.' "It is requisite that there be an original propensity of some kind, in order to be a basis for self-love, by giving a relish to the objects of its pursuit; and none more fit for this purpose than benevolence or humanity."<sup>1</sup> All this speaks the language of a consistent hedonism bent on reducing the moral consciousness in all its phases to the simplicity of pleasure and pain.

But side by side with the above theory runs another tendency to recognize other impulses than a desire for pleasure, and to regard the social impulses and sentiments as not merely catering to the enjoyment of a fixed self, capable only of egoistic pleasures and pains, but rather as so socializing and transforming the individual as to make him enjoy, not as private or exclusive, but as social and inclusive. Desire is held to be aroused not merely from pain and pleasure but also from 'a natural impulse or instinct, which is perfectly unaccountable'; and as such instincts are named 'benevolence, resentment, love of life, kindness to children, desire of happiness to our friends, fear, hunger, lust and a few other bodily appetites.'<sup>2</sup> "These passions, properly speaking, produce good and evil, and proceed not from them, like the other affections." In the appendix to the *Enquiry* the independent character of these instincts is further asserted and defended by substantially Hutcheson's argument. Another's good may, 'by means of that affection' (benevolence) become our own, and be afterward 'pursued from the combined motives of benevolence and self-enjoyments.' The important point is that the self which enjoys benevolent acts, even though these be of a merely impulsive sort, is potentially a moral Individual, and has a broader basis for future moral development than the Individual who responds merely to pleasure and pain. For this is a long step from the 'simplicity' of strict hedonism. It is a movement toward the recognition that the desirable end may be measured in other

<sup>1</sup> *Enquiry*, Sec. IX., Pt. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Treatise*, Bk. II., Pt. III., Sec. 9, 3.

terms than merely its hedonic tone. It means the vague recognition of the difference between pleasure communicated by sympathy or 'contagion,' and pleasure or satisfaction due to the actual regard for my neighbor's welfare as such, even though it conflicts with my own.

This same motive seems to underlie the phraseology already noticed, in which virtue is described as that which gives pleasure of a '*particular kind*' even though the emphasis seems to be on the 'pleasure' as the important factor, and the whole psychology of the individual seems on the verge of reconstruction in the attempt to understand the objective and general character of moral sentiments and judgments. Even as it stands the passage shows a better appreciation of the implications of a moral judgment than appears in the well-known passage of Mill's *Utilitarianism*. "Each person desires his own happiness, \* \* \* each person's happiness is a good to that person, and the general happiness, therefore, a good to the aggregate of all persons."

## SECTION IX.

### THE INDIVIDUAL THE CREATION OF SOCIAL FORCES.

It is in Adam Smith that the social character of the entire moral life receives fullest recognition. It is not that he regards the individual as absorbed in the social welfare and forgetful of himself and his private interests. There is by no means so enthusiastic a view of the benevolent character of the individual as with Hutcheson, nor does Smith demonstrate so eloquently as Shaftesbury that man can be happy only in the exercise of his social affections. His theory of the moral sentiments is quite in line with his theory of political economy, in the view that self-interest is the strongest natural force, and he considers that it is well that this should be the case. "Every man is first and principally recommended to his own care. His own pleasures are the substance, those of others are the shadow."<sup>1</sup> He speaks of a 'feeble spark of benevolence which Nature has lighted up in the human heart';<sup>2</sup> and again remarks that

<sup>1</sup> *Moral Sents.*, Pt. VI., Sec. 2, Ch. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Pt. III., Ch. 3.



the selfish side is 'by no means the weak side of human nature.'<sup>1</sup>

It is his conviction that the welfare of the whole is best subserved by this constitution of human nature which directs our attention and affection first to ourselves, then to our immediate relatives and friends, and later on to our nation, and finally to mankind.<sup>2</sup> All this was a more faithful reflection of the individual life of man in this century of commercial relations than was the optimism of Shaftesbury, or the benevolent theory of Hutcheson. Smith's great achievement lay rather in the line of recognition that man's moral life is not the result of his individual impulses and natural affections, but is rather preëminently the outcome of the social forces which have played upon him through all past history and with increasing strength as the race has developed in the means of social intercourse.

It probably was not in his thought that the separation which he achieved in his *Wealth of Nations*, between the economic life of man and the other aspects of human experience, pointed toward just the distinction which he had achieved in his theory of moral sentiments; but there is, at any rate, an interesting parallel. For by isolating the conception of wealth and all human desires that relate properly to that end, Smith made it possible to see more clearly the difference between the economic values and motives on the one hand, and moral values and motives on the other. Now, in the *Moral Sentiments* he says very clearly that all the moral judgments and values are pronounced from a distinctly social standpoint. The interesting problems, therefore, in considering Smith's conception of the individual and society, will be discovered if we show in some detail his attempt to state the social character of the moral judgments; and in the next place, see how he aims to account for this social moral self.

#### 1. *The Social Factor in the Moral Judgments.*

The three most important aspects of the moral consciousness which Smith considers are judgments (*a*) upon the propriety of actions; (*b*) upon the merit of action, and (*c*) upon our own conduct in the form of conscience.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Pt. VII., Sec. 2, Ch. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Pt. VI., Sec. 2, Ch. 1.

As to the propriety of actions, this means the suitability of the antecedent affections to the object proposed, or to the cause which excites; and we judge of the propriety of the acts of another by asking whether we could 'go along with the other' in his act. Could we feel as he feels, and could we act as he acts? If so, then we can sympathize with his sentiments, and in so doing we approve the act. As compared with the theory of his fellow-Scot, which we have just been considering, we note that this has a more striking emphasis upon the æsthetic element in our own judgments of moral conduct. It is not merely the question as to whether the act excites agreeable feelings in the agent or in others. We approve the act without any consideration of its consequences. We consider the motives and the appropriateness of the action in view of those motives, and if the act is one that we could 'go along with,' and therefore one which any one could 'go along with,' we approve it. The sense of propriety, therefore, is primarily a disinterested judgment by all spectators.

(b) With reference to the merit of acts, the same social standard is also on the surface and needs no detailed statement, for the merit of acts arises from our sympathy with the gratitude or the resentment of some one who is affected by the acts, and it is only as we can 'go along with' such gratitude or resentment that we can attach the sense of merit or demerit to human actions. Here again it is interesting to note that our sympathy is not merely with the passive feeling of the actor or of the persons affected, but it is rather with their active impulses, and the significance of this will be considered later on.

(c) It is in his statement of the social nature of conscience that Smith's reflections have the greatest interest. We have seen that, with the exception of Butler, British moralists of this century had particularly ignored the problems of conscience and duty, largely because these problems were not easy of answer in terms of an individualistic psychology. Hume gives an answer which practically eliminates entirely the element of authority from the sense of obligation and leaves this sense of duty as merely a competing force of self-interest. Smith, by recognizing the social nature of conscience, is enabled to give



it a more conspicuous position, while nevertheless, he can explain it in terms of social psychology. For just as I approve the actions of others, so I must recognize that others are approving or disapproving my actions, and by identifying myself with the judging public I make myself as judge a social self, and therefore feel the authority of a judgment which transcends my private and particular impulses. In this full recognition of the social nature of conscience, Smith completes the account of the moral life in terms which allow him to recognize, instead of ignore, the most vital part of that life.

## 2. *The Rational Element in the Moral Individual.*

Smith introduces a rational element in the social self of the moral life, and thus aims to reach not merely a universal which is constituted by a number of concurring individuals, but one which is a true universal. This appears in each of the phases of the moral life which we have noted above.

In the first place, it is seen in our estimate of the propriety of actions; for Smith evidently does not intend to say that every act which we might sympathize with, or which, in some moods, we do sympathize with, is a proper act. It is an act which we, not merely as individuals, but as 'impartial spectators,' can sympathize with, that we approve as proper; and the supposed impartial spectator is not defined in a merely negative way, as the man who has no positive bias. He is the reasonable man; the man who can form a judgment of the relation between the end and the means, between the cause and the effect.

This rational element appears also in our judgments upon the merit of actions. This judgment is stated by Smith to be a compound judgment, depending indirectly upon our sympathy with the gratitude or resentment of the person acted upon, and directly upon our sympathy with the motive of the person who is acting. It is his emphasis upon this latter element, in Smith's own estimation, which distinguishes his system especially from that of Hume. Smith holds that our estimate of the utility of actions plays, on the whole, a relatively minor part in our judgments upon their moral value.

Now, as we have just seen, the element of propriety involves



the rational relation, for a sense of harmony or discord, if we trace it to its æsthetic elements, involves much more than mere susceptibility to pleasure and pain. It involves pleasure and pain arising from the recognition of unity or lack of unity; and this in turn means that a self which can feel pleasure or pain because of unity or lack of unity, is a self which can express itself fully and easily only through unity. Therefore the æsthetic judgment of propriety, which Smith makes so fundamental in the moral consciousness, really pre-supposes a rational self which is seeking expression through these judgments.

This distinction between the actual public and the real social self appears most explicitly in the account of conscience, where the actual judgments of the public, 'the man without the breast,' are set off against the judgment of the true social self, 'the man within the breast.' Here we have made in explicit form the ambiguity which runs implicitly through the treatment of propriety and merit. Smith's statement is that the 'man within the breast' is the judge of what is praiseworthy, and praiseworthiness as distinguished from praise is defined as that character which is not merely approved by others, but which we should ourselves approve. The desire to be worthy of praise, therefore, means a desire that men should regard us in the same light as we should regard actions in others which we praise.

But if we take this statement of the case as complete, it is evident that we should simply revolve in a circle, without ever reaching any real distinction between the individual feeling expressed in praise or blame, and the universal moral approval which Smith is trying to distinguish. For if I can actually approve my own acts, and if approval means merely an emotional attitude, then it is evident that I do not raise this to any higher principle by my supposed reference to the judgment of the impartial spectator, since the only test which I am supposed to apply to his fairness is the fact that it evokes my emotional response. That is to say, if I judge myself by an impartial spectator, and then judge this impartial spectator by the same self, it is evident that I never get above my own level. I am simply adopting Baron Münchhausen's method in the moral world, of lifting my emotions to a universal standpoint by the

sole leverage of imagination. As if vaguely aware of this impossibility, Smith repeatedly uses, throughout this section, language which expresses an entirely different conception of the impartial spectator. Thus, our judgment bears some reference to what 'ought to be the judgment of others'; 'praiseworthiness and blameworthiness express what naturally ought to be the sentiments of other people'; 'nature has endowed man with a desire of having what ought to be approved of'; 'we dread the thought of doing anything which can render us the *just and proper* objects of the hatred and contempt of our fellow creatures.'

In several of these cases he gives as alternative language for 'what ought to be approved of,' 'or of having what he himself approves of in other men,' and apparently does not recognize the decisive difference in the two expressions. But it is perhaps in the conception of the 'all-seeing judge' that the inadequacy of the merely emotional justification of the sense of duty is best disclosed. This all-seeing judge 'whose eye can never be deceived and whose judgments can never be perverted'; who judges with 'unerring rectitude,' cannot possibly be translated to mean the judge whose decisions we in every case emotionally accord with. For this would be not only to eliminate any possibility of condemning ourselves by the standard of his justice. It would also prevent me from finding in him an independent reinforcement and support to my own supposedly rightful attitude. It is of course true enough that in the last analysis our conception of such a just judge must be drawn entirely from our own ideas, but Smith's imagery fails to account for the formation of an ideal which transcends the present emotion.

### 3. *Inadequacy of Sympathy as Socializing Agency.*

This brings us naturally to the consideration of the process by which Smith would explain the formation of the moral sentiments. This, as is well-known, is done by the agency of sympathy. The propriety of an act is measured by the consonance of the agent's feelings and motives with my own; the merit and demerit, by my sympathy with the emotions of those who are

affected, as well as with the emotions of the actor ; and finally, conscience, by my sympathy with those who judge my acts. It is evident, then, that that sympathy is expected to transform the individual to a social consciousness. The conception of sympathy with which Smith prefaces his account of the moral sentiments is very nearly that of Hume, in the *Treatise*. The chief difference seems to be that Smith lays more stress upon the act of imagination, by which I place myself in another's circumstances. 'It is by changing places in fancy with the sufferer that we come either to conceive or to be affected by what he feels.' It 'does not rise so much from the view of the passion as from that of the situation which excites it.'

With Hume, on the other hand, we saw that the tendency in the *Treatise* was to conceive it as a mere emotional reflex, produced by the sight of certain signs of emotion in others. Does this change in the conception, by which a greater stress is laid upon the imagination, indicate any material change in the principle of sympathy, which will fit it to become a genuinely social principle? Smith is very confident that he has made it such. The classic statement, which is, to be sure, rather negative than positive, rather defending sympathy from the charge of being a selfish principle than asserting it to be a distinctly social principle, is that in Part VII., sect. 3 :

"Sympathy, however, cannot in any sense be regarded as a selfish principle. When I sympathize with your sorrow or your indignation, it may be pretended, indeed, that my emotion is founded in self-love, because it arises from bringing your case home to myself, from putting myself in your situation, and thence conceiving what I should feel in the like circumstances. But though sympathy is very properly said to arise from an imaginary change of situations with the person principally concerned, yet this imaginary change is not supposed to happen to me in my own person and character, but in that of the person with whom I sympathize. When I condole with you for the loss of your only son, in order to enter into your grief I do not consider what I, a person of such a character and profession, should suffer if I had a son, and if that son was unfortunately to die ; but I consider what I should suffer if I was really you, and I not only change circumstances with you, but I change persons and characters. My grief, therefore, is entirely upon your account, and not in the least upon my own. It is not, therefore, in the least selfish. How can that be regarded as a selfish passion which does not arise even from the imagination of anything that has befallen, or that relates to myself, in my own proper person and character, but which is entirely occupied about what relates to you."

Let us see, however, whether the identifying of myself with



you, through an imaginary change of situations, really makes it necessary that my grief should be 'entirely upon your account.' It of course means that while I am by fancy playing your part, I play it with all the emotional concomitants. If I am to play Hamlet, I must mourn for my father; but does it by any means follow that Hamlet is really anything to me while I am myself? Suppose I am presiding at a banquet, at which my dearest enemy is present, and that I know him to be a man who suffers agonies if called upon to make a speech. I may, by imagination, transfer myself to his consciousness and picture all the agony of embarrassment and confusion and general disgust which will follow if he is called upon, but this may not prevent me in the least from proceeding to call upon him, and so far from filling me with remorse because of the vividness with which I have just pictured his dismay, it may even give a keener edge to my malicious joy in his discomfiture, as I proceed to put him to torture. Is, then, the principle of sympathy, as Smith describes it, a selfish principle? No; neither is it a social principle. It is merely an agency by which I may put myself in another's place, and thereby have the capacity for doing him greater service or greater injury, according to my purpose. It does not necessarily make me seek my neighbor's good. It merely makes it possible for me to do good more effectively, provided I have the will to do it.

The fundamental psychological inadequacy of the principle lies or is contained in the above quotation; for a genuine sympathy in the moral sense of the word, by which we must seek to relieve others' misfortunes and to increase their joys, involves a distinct recognition of these sorrows and joys as belonging to another. If, therefore, I merely transfer myself by imagination to the other's situation, I have lost the very essence of the sympathetic situation.

4. *How can the Individual become an 'Impartial Spectator'?*

The psychological inadequacy already noted is also implicit in Smith's account of such a social conception as that of an 'impartial spectator.'

The judgments as to the propriety of acts or sentiments in

the case of others are of two classes. The first class embraces the judgments in which all observers are equally disinterested, *i. e.*, the intellectual and æsthetic judgments. Harmony here needs no especial explanation in Smith's opinion.<sup>1</sup> The more important class is that in which observer and observed are differently affected, such as those of misfortune or injury to one of the individuals. Approval by the observer must rest on sympathy, and this in turn must be founded on an imaginary change of situation. "The spectator must, first of all, endeavor as much as he can, to put himself in the situation of the other, and to bring home to himself every little circumstance of distress which can possibly occur to the sufferer. He must adopt the whole case of his companion with all its minutest incident."<sup>2</sup> Complete identity of feeling cannot be attained. "Mankind, though naturally sympathetic, never conceive, for what has befallen another, that degree of passion which naturally animates the person principally concerned." The person concerned must lower his passion 'to that pitch in which the spectators are capable of going along with him,' if he would be in harmony with those about him. Even after this adjustment, 'what they feel will always be in some respects, different from what he feels.' This difference between what they feel and what he feels is the difference between an impartial spectator and an interested actor or sufferer. To what is this difference due, what is the psychological basis of impartiality? The ground stated is the inability of the imagination to make the change in situation perfect. "That imaginary change of situation upon which their sympathy is founded is but momentary. The thought of their own safety, the thought that they themselves are not really the sufferers, continually intrudes itself upon them; and though it does not hinder them from conceiving a passion somewhat analogous to what is felt by the sufferer, hinders them from conceiving anything that approaches to the same degree of violence."<sup>3</sup> From this it would appear that the difference between agent and spectator were wholly quantitative.

<sup>1</sup> *Moral Sentiments*, Pt. I., Sec. I, Ch. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Mor. Sent.*, Pt. I., Sec. I., Ch. 4.



We see the inadequacy of such an account of the formation of an 'impartial spectator' if we consider that on this theory complete success in identification of the two situations, or of the imaginary transfer, would mean that spectator and agent would coincide, thence the spectator as such would vanish; there would be no moral judgment. This is but the necessary consequence of making the difference between agent and spectator a quantitative one. There is indeed one passage which affirms a qualitative difference,<sup>1</sup> but this difference is not analyzed and there is no reason to suppose that the distinction between an impartial spectator in the negative sense, and a fair or just judge in the positive sense of a genuinely social consciousness, ever stood out clearly enough to constitute a problem.

For in Smith, as in Hume's *Treatise*, we have an attempt to explain the facts of the moral life from individualistic units, although these units are conceived as capable of acting upon each other to a certain extent. Leaving out of account the phrases which hint at a more adequate view, the psychical units of Smith's theory are constituted by imagination, reason, feeling, and certain impulses of gratitude, resentment, and a 'feeble spark of benevolence.' These units, being similar in their processes and capable of changing situations by imagination, repeat less vividly the feelings of each other, and further act as mirrors in which each sees its own conduct reflected. The individual does not know the concept of a common, social good, which forms the end of his purpose, the object of his desire, the center of his hopes, enthusiasms and devotion. Nor is he conceived as a member of a group, whether of the clan of earlier society or of the multifarious groups of to-day, in which the group interests, group standards and group reactions are the constant pattern for imitation, the constant atmosphere, the constantly impressed authority, until the unconscious solidarity of primitive or child-life gives place gradually to the consciously individual interests and motives on the one hand, and to the conscious recognition of social standards and control on the

<sup>1</sup> "The secret consciousness that the change of situations, from which the sympathetic situation arises, is but imaginary, not only lowers it in degree, but, in some measure, varies it in kind and gives it quite a different modification." Pt. I., Sec. I, Ch. 4.



other. It is in such a process that social judgments are formed; but it is no reason for surprise that Adam Smith did not reach an adequate conception of this process.

##### 5. *Smith as the Interpreter of His Age.*

Smith's account of the Individual's moral and social judgments, however, was more than the mere theory of a closet psychologist. It was in certain aspects a strikingly true interpretation of the actual judgments and the actual sympathies and motives of his time, even as Shaftesbury and Mandeville had reflected other aspects. For, as indicated at the outset, one prominent characteristic of the time was a great increase in general intelligence, and a greater degree of toleration in religion and of mutual understanding. Men did actually enter into their neighbors' situations and place themselves at their neighbors' point of view to a far greater degree than in the preceding centuries of religious and political partisanship. This was the basis of their greater kindliness. It might be a poor foundation for the sterner virtues demanded in times of war or persecution. It was a valuable stage in preparation for a broader and deeper patriotism and religion. The sympathies of such an age are not those born of a common devotion or of common interest. They are born rather of mutual understanding and quick emotional response. They soften grief and increase our pleasures, but cannot be relied upon to hold when subjected to the strains of danger or diverging interests.

The judgments of an age of intellectual enlightenment and economic forces are likewise reflected in Smith's account. There is in such relations a frank recognition of egoistic aims and motives. In so far, each understands his neighbor and can 'go along with him.' Egoistic aims are as much the basis of trade as social or collective aims are the basis of the institutions dominant in the earlier ethical situation. But the economic or egoistic aims are limited in organized commerce by the desire to make the exchange, and the implied recognition that the bargain cannot be too one-sided. If one of the parties goes beyond a certain degree of cupidity the other will fail to 'go along with' him. The difference between the sentiments

of the 'person particularly concerned' and that of the 'impartial spectator' is in this case, as Smith has described it, really a difference of degree. I do not expect or desire my customer or competitor to seek my interest; I merely cannot approve or 'go along with' him when he is egoistic beyond a certain point. The 'impartiality' of the spectator, as compared with the person principally concerned, may be of a similarly quantitative character in certain other cases, but the term 'impartial' suggests immediately the judge of conflicting economic interests, rather than the ideal of higher achievement or of larger social life and purer motive. The phrases 'praiseworthiness,' 'ought to be approved,' and others, already noticed, call indeed for a different ideal. They require for explanation a recognition of dualism in the self — whether this be defined as dualism between the intelligible and empirical, between rational self and self of desires, between egoistic and social, or between functional and structural; and this dualism had been temporarily lost from view in the absorbing empirical interests of the age.

The ethical theory of the eighteenth century has presented a view of the individual which reflects the economic and intellectual life of the age. Starting with thoroughly individualistic conceptions, measuring value in terms of feeling, conceiving reason largely as a mere means for obtaining the goods of feeling, and regarding desire and will as determined by feelings already experienced rather than by ideals of action, it never completely transcends these limitations. Nevertheless the conception expands to include new and more generous impulses. The abstractness of the older intellectualism is brought clearly into view; the dangers of the analytic method are in a measure recognized; the rational factor is introduced as an internal principle of control; the social forces are given an increasing recognition as the agencies which create and foster the moral life. The way is open for a system which will be enabled to assume the social good as the criterion and end of action, and rely on the social and immanent forces to make the social weal the motive to action.





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